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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF
WEST INDIAN, WHITE AND ASIAN MOTHERS
IN THE HOME AND AT WORK

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SUMMARY

An examination of the employment situations of West Indian, white and Asian women waged workers in Britain reveals both shared characteristics and ethnic differences. My research considers the main similarities and differences and assesses the significance of four major determinants of women's employment options. Gender divisions within the labour market, state and employers' policies towards working mothers, cultural differences in the interpretation of gender roles and the ideology of parentcraft, and racial discrimination are examined.

My analysis derives from an examination of existing literature and my own empirical research which was conducted during 1978 and 1979 in the Handsworth area of Birmingham. My research consists of a study of child care facilities, a survey of local employment opportunities, which was conducted by means of interviews with major employers and follow-up enquiries in response to job vacancy advertisements, and semi-structured taped interviews with 31 West Indian, 22 Asian and 16 white mothers.

Previous approaches to women's employment fail to recognise differences between women and do not sufficiently consider the relationship between the structure of the labour market and the role of women within the family. My research provides substantive evidence of the relationship between women's role in the family and their role in production, and demonstrates variations in the employment and family situation of women of different ethnic origins and the influence of state and employers' policies.

I show that while a worker's gender is more significant than ethnic origin in determining their employment situation, ethnic differences must also be considered. Cultural variations in the interpretation of gender roles, and the ideology of motherhood, have a significant impact on the proportion of women who engage in paid labour, and the number of hours worked, while racial discrimination influences the type of work performed and the level of unemployment experienced by black workers.

[100]

113

113

64

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	xi
Declaration	xi

PART ONE: WOMEN AND WORK IN BRITAIN

1. <u>Approaches to Women in the Labour Market</u>	1
Neoclassical Theory	3
Empirical Sociological Studies	6
The Dual Labour Market Approach	9
Women's Domestic Labour	14
Waged Work and the Family	18
Women as an Industrial Reserve Army	21
Limitations to Marxist Analyses	26
The Family Wage	29
Summary	31
Differences and Divisions	32
Black Workers	33
Economic Activity Rates	34
Job Levels	34
Industrial and Plant Concentration	36
Shiftwork	38
Earnings	40
Unemployment	41
Women Waged Workers	43
Bibliography	45
2. <u>Paid Employment Amongst Women, and Specifically Mothers, in Britain During the 1970s</u>	50
Employment Rates for Women	50
Type of Employment	55
Earnings	60
Employment Rates for Mothers of Pre-School Children	61
Hours of Employment	65
Type of Employment	67
The Situation of Women's Employment in the 1970s and 1980s	68
Bibliography	72
3. <u>Recent State Policy and Employers' Attitudes:</u>	
<u>The Position Facing Employed Mothers in the Mid-1970s</u>	73
Major State Legislation	74
Day Care Provision	81
Results of Inadequate Child Care Facilities	89
Mothers who want to work are prevented	89
Choice of child care severely restricted	90
Choice of employment restricted	93
Implications for West Indian and Asian mothers	93

Employers' Attitudes and Policies Towards Employed Mothers	98
Company Maternity Arrangements	102
Company Nurseries	106
Retraining after Absence from Employment	108
Leave to Care for Sick Children	108
Homework	109
Benefits to Employers	110
Part-Time Employment	111
Benefits to Employers	114
Recent State Policies and Employers' Attitudes	116
Bibliography	119

PART TWO: BACKGROUND OF WEST INDIAN, WHITE AND ASIAN WOMEN IN BRITAIN

4. <u>Women's Employment and Family Position in Britain, During and Since, The Second World War</u>	124
The Employment of Women During the War	124
Post-War Economy	128
Women in the Family	131
Women as Mothers	134
Women's Employment and Family Position in Britain, During and Since, the Second World War	138
Bibliography	141
5. <u>The Background of West Indian Women Migrants in Britain</u>	142
The Economy of the West Indies	142
Family Structure in the West Indies	145
Women's Employment in the West Indies	149
Child Care in the West Indies	153
Migration to Britain - The Effect on Family Structure	155
Bibliography	162
6. <u>The Background of Asian Women Migrants in Britain</u>	164
Sikhism	165
Hinduism	167
Islam	168
Purdah	169
Women's Employment in Pakistan	172
Women's Employment in India	176
Migration to Britain - The Effect on Family Structure	178
Bibliography	185
7. <u>Comparative Analysis of Paid Employment Amongst West Indian, White and Asian Women in Britain</u>	187
Rates of Economic Activity	187
Cultural Influences on Rates of Economic Activity	194
Type of Work Performed	202
Similarities in the Employment Situations of West Indian, White and Asian women	205
Differences in the Employment Situations of West Indian, White and Asian women	206

The Dual Oppression of Black Women Waged Workers	208
Black Women Waged Workers in the National Health Service	209
Comparative Analysis of Paid Employment Amongst West Indian, White and Asian Women in Britain	216
Bibliography	219

PART THREE: THE SURVEY

8. <u>Background of Sample</u>	222
Methodology	222
Characteristics of Respondents	226
9. <u>The Survey Area: Child Care Provision and Employment Opportunities</u>	237
(I) Child Care Provision in Birmingham and the Survey Area	240
Local Authority Day Nurseries, Nursery Centres, and Day Care Centres	240
Statistics on Birmingham	241
Criteria for entry to a day nursery in Birmingham	243
Cost	246
Situation in the Survey Area	249
Childminders	250
Support Services for Minders	252
Paid Minders	252
Childminding in the Survey Area	253
Loxells Social Development Centre Under Fives Unit and St. James' Centre	253
The Van Leer Project	254
Unregistered Minding in the Survey Area	255
Private and Voluntary Nurseries	255
Situation in the Survey Area	256
Playgroups	256
Nursery Schools and Nursery Classes	258
Situation in the Survey Area	259
Comments on Child Care Provision in the Survey Area	259
Child Care and Black Children	262
(II) Employment Opportunities Available to Women Living in the Survey Area	263
Methodology of Survey	263
Structure of the Local Labour Market	264
Local Employers' Attitudes	268
Availability of Jobs for Women Living in the Survey Area	270
Child Care Provision and Employment Opportunities in the Survey Area	275
Bibliography	277

10.	Perception of the Roles of Wife and Mother	280
	1. Reasons for Marriage	
	Implications of marriage for women	280
	Desire for marriage	283
	West Indian Respondents	
	Advantages of marriage	285
	White Respondents	
	Why marry?	288
	Asian Respondents	
	Inevitability of marriage	291
	Reasons for marriage	292
	2. Reasons for Motherhood - Use of Contraception	293
	West Indian Respondents	
	Perception of illegitimacy	293
	Views on Family Planning	296
	Ignorance of sex, contraception and abortion	299
	Views on contraception and abortion	302
	White Respondents	
	Illegitimacy	307
	Family Planning	308
	Asian Respondents	
	Family Planning	312
	Cultural Influences on Motherhood	314
	Reasons for Motherhood	315
	3. Perception of Gender Roles	316
	West Indian Respondents	316
	White Respondents	318
	Asian Respondents	320
	Sexual Division of Abilities	321
	West Indian Respondents	
	Characteristics of a 'good' husband and those of a 'good' wife	321
	Relative importance of wage work for men and women	323
	Role reversal	324
	White Respondents	
	Characteristics of a 'good' husband and those of a 'good' wife	325
	Relative importance of wage work for men and women	326
	Role reversal	327
	Asian Respondents	
	Characteristics of a 'good' husband and those of a 'good' wife	328
	Role reversal	329
	Perception of Gender Roles	329

4. Perception of the Roles of Mother and Father	331
West Indian Respondents	
Childhood of respondents	331
Exclusiveness of mother/child relationship	333
Importance of 'formative' years	334
Exclusiveness of motherhood	335
Attitude to communal living	336
The role of a 'good' mother and that of the father	337
White Respondents	
Childhood of respondents	340
Exclusiveness of mother/child relationship	340
Importance of 'formative' years	341
Exclusiveness of motherhood	342
Attitude to communal living	344
The role of a 'good' mother and that of the father	344
Asian Respondents	
Childhood of respondents	347
Exclusiveness of mother/child relationship	348
Exclusiveness of motherhood	349
Attitude to communal living	349
The role of a 'good' mother and that of the father	350
Perception of the Roles of Mother and Father	352
5. Attitude to Child Care	353
West Indian Respondents	
Child care used and preference of mother	353
Day nurseries	354
Childminding	358
Split-shift child care	359
White Respondents	
Day nurseries	359
Childminding	362
Split-shift child care	363
Asian Respondents	363
Attitude to Child Care	365
6. Conflict Between the Roles of Wife/Mother and Paid Worker	367
Physical Conflict	367
West Indian Respondents	
Father's participation in child care	367
White Respondents	
Father's participation in child care	371
Asian Respondents	
Father's participation in child care	374
Father's Participation in Child Care	376
Emotional Conflict	377
Perception of the Roles of Wife and Mother	379

11. <u>Experience of Paid Labour</u>	380
1. <u>Reasons for Working/Not Working</u>	380
West Indian Respondents	
Escape from the boredom and isolation of domesticity	381
Absence of social life	383
Desire for financial independence	385
White Respondents	
Escape from the boredom and isolation of domesticity	389
Absence of social life	390
Importance of the wife's wage	391
Family income	394
Reasons for not engaging in wage work	394
Influence of husbands	395
Asian Respondents	
Importance of the woman's wage	396
Household economy	396
If relieved of the financial necessity of work	398
Escape from boredom and isolation	398
Reasons for not engaging in wage work - cultural and family constraints	400
Reasons for Working/Not Working	403
2. <u>Education and Qualifications of Respondents</u>	404
West Indian Respondents	
Education of respondents	405
Attitude to education	405
White Respondents	
Education of respondents	409
Attitude to education	409
Asian Respondents	
Formal education	410
Attitude to education	411
Education and Qualifications of Respondents	412
3. <u>Employment Pattern</u>	413
West Indian Respondents	
Employment prior to migration	413
Employment at the time of the interviews	415
Limitations on employment options	417
Termination of employment	421
Choosing work	422
White Respondents	
Type of employment	422
Termination of employment	423
Limitations on employment options	424
Asian Respondents	
Factory work	426
Homework	427
Employment Pattern	428

PART FOUR: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH FOR SOCIAL POLICY AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

12. <u>The Shared and Specific Oppression of White, West Indian and Asian Women in Britain</u>	430
(I) Summary of Information Presented	431
Employment	434
Economic Activity Rates	434
Perception of a Woman's Wage	434
Factors in addition to the wage which influence women's decision to engage in waged labour	436
Type of work performed	437
Constraints on choice of employment	438
Cultural Variations in the Interpretation of Gender Roles	440
Ideology of Parenthood and Child Care	442
(II) Limitations of Research	445
(III) Implications of Research for Social Policy	448
Education	448
Family Planning	450
Employment	450
Job-Sharing	451
Homework	452
Provisions for Mothers to Return to the Labour Market	452
Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay	453
Child Care Provision	455
Social Security	456
(IV) Prospects	456
Employment Opportunities	456
Implications of Unemployment for West Indian, Asian and White Women	459
Child Care Provision	463
Employment Situation of West Indian, White and Asian Mothers	465
Bibliography	467

APPENDIX

<u>Research Chronicle</u>	
Choice of Subject of Research	470
Establishing Contact with Handsworth	473
Sample Selection	480
Design of Interview Schedule	482
Initial Contact with Respondents	484
Interview Procedure	487
Writing Up	493
<u>Interview Schedule</u>	
Part One	496
Part Two	

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
2:1 Employees in Employment, 1971-1977	51
2:2 Labour Force Estimates, 1971-1976	53
2:3 Economic Activity Rates, June 1976	54
2:4 Employees by Industrial Sector at June 1977	56
2:5 Average Gross Hourly Earnings	60
2:6 Employment Rates for Women with Pre-School Children in Various Local Authority Areas and in Britain (1971)	63
2:8 Proportion of Working Mothers with Youngest Child Under Five Working 18, 18-30, and over 30 hours per week in 1971	65
2:7 Full and Part-Time Employment Rates for Women with Children aged 0-4 by Age of Child	66
7:1 Employment Rates and Hours of Work for Women with Children under 5	189
7:2 Occupational Crowding Amongst Women in Great Britain	203
8:1 Country of Birth of Respondents	226
8:2 Age of Respondents	227
8:3 Marital Status of Respondents	228
8:4 Household Structure of Respondents	228
8:5 Children Living with Respondents	229
8:6 Youngest Child Living with Respondent	230
8:7 Age of Respondents at Migration	231
8:8 Pattern of Migration of Respondents	232
8:9 Date of Migration of Respondents	232
8:10 Employment of Husband/Cohabitee	234
8:11 Income of Head of Household	235
8:12 Type of Housing Occupied by Respondents	236
8:13 Number of Rooms Occupied by Respondent	236
9:1 Residents with both parents born in the New Commonwealth as percentage of total population 1971	237
9:2 Age Structure of Respondents in Study by Rex and Tomlinson	238
9:3 Population under 5 with both parents born in New Commonwealth as percentage of total under 5 population, 1971	238
9:4 Percentage of households at more than 11 persons per room, 1971	239
Percentage of households with exclusive use of hot water, bath or shower and inside w.c. 1971	240
9:5 Economic Activity Rate of Married Women	242
9:6 Child Care Provision in Birmingham	243
9:7 Day Nurseries - Child days per 1,000 under five	243
9:8 Breakdown of the 1,419 children on the register at 1 January 1979	244

	page
9:9 Net cost per child day in a day nursery	246
9:10 Weekly charges for Local Authority Day Nurseries, January/February 1979	248
9:11 Day Nurseries in the Survey Area	250
9:12 Private and Voluntary Nurseries in the Survey Area (June 1979)	257
9:13 Nursery Schools and Nursery Classes in the Survey Area (June 1979)	260
9:14 Economic Activity Rates, Population aged 15 and over	265
9:15 Occupational Structure, West Midlands County	265
9:16 Employment, current or last, of a sample of women under 35 years of age living in the survey area	266
9:17 Average Weekly Earnings for Full-Time Employees 1974	268
9:18 Average Annual Earnings within the West Midlands by Broad Occupational Group	269
9:19 Male and Female Unemployment Rates by Local Area and County as a Percentage of Great Britain	270
9:20 Percentage Unemployment Rates for Great Britain, West Midlands and Birmingham Metropolitan District, 1976-1981	270
9:21 Results of Newspaper Survey	272
11:1 Jobs held by West Indian and White Sample	418

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Declaration

A limited part of the empirical data contained in this thesis is due to appear in a Chapter of a book, Migrant Women Workers, edited by Annie Phizackee and published by Routledge and Kegan Paul.

CHAPTER 1

APPROACHES TO WOMEN IN THE LABOUR MARKET

During the last two decades there has been a marked increase in the number of academic, official and journalistic studies on women's work, both paid and domestic. These studies, which deal specifically with the employment of women, mark a break from the traditional approach which, as Brown (1970) demonstrates, frequently ignored women workers either by choosing to study exclusively male occupations¹, or by treating workers as neuter beings and making no reference to the sexual divisions within the labour market. Male and female workers were regarded as indistinguishable and it was assumed to be valid to generalize about all employees from studies which may have considered only one sex². The possibility that gender affected the experience of waged work was ignored³.

At the other extreme, however, women workers have been treated as a totally different category from male workers and seen as causing and experiencing problems which simply do not apply to men. Similarities between male and female workers were obscured by concentrating on the 'problems' of women's waged labour. Often these studies attributed to the women themselves responsibility for their subordinate position within the labour market⁴.

1. For example, steelworkers (Banks 1960), fishermen (Turnstall 1962), coal miners (Scott et. al. 1963), lorry drivers (Hollowell 1968), shipbuilders (Brown et. al. 1972).
2. For example, Viteles 1954, Kahn 1958, Tannenbaum 1966.
3. In discussions of the Hawthorne Experiments, for example, the fact that the assemblers, who increased their output, were women and the wirers, who restricted their output, were men, was not identified as significant.
4. Discussed on pages 6-9.

Women's domestic labour has received less attention within the literature and, as Oakley has observed, it is only relatively recently that sociology has treated housework as work or devoted any study to it⁵. Moreover, it is only since the 'domestic labour debate' that women's role in the family has been considered in economic rather than cultural terms.

The increase in studies of women's employment has arisen partly in response to the dramatic rise in the number of women, particularly married women, engaging in waged work since the Second World War (see Chapter 4). Despite the rise in women's employment, however, the studies all demonstrate the sexual inequality which continues to exist within the labour market. Thus, the majority of women receive less pay than men, and are concentrated at the bottom end of the skill hierarchy. Also, women workers are concentrated within a limited range of occupations and industries and the majority work part-time (see Chapter 2). Whilst the studies agree on the characteristics of women's work, disagreement arises over explanations as to why women remain in a subordinate position within the labour market.

In this Chapter I consider the major theories of women's work and argue that their role in production cannot be understood without a consideration of women's position within the family. In particular I note that all the approaches to women's work, which I consider in this Chapter, treat women as a homogeneous group and ignore differences between them. Since the

5. Friedman (1963), Gavron (1968), Gall (1968), Lopata (1971), Oakley (1974), Hobson (1978) examine the social role, and experience, of housework.

6. The 'domestic labour debate' is considered on pages 14-18.

focus of this thesis is on the importance of gender relative to culture I devote the final part of this Chapter to a comparison of the employment positions of white and black men in order to assess the importance of cultural differences.

Neoclassical Theory

One approach to the study of women's waged labour is that of neoclassical theory which concentrates almost exclusively upon what economists term the 'supply' side of labour. The focus of attention within this theory is the individual who is perceived as exercising freedom of choice in making rational decisions in response to economic variables. An individual's behaviour, it is believed, can be explained in terms of economic considerations and social or cultural influences on behaviour are largely dismissed. Thus "the human subject of neoclassical investigation is a timeless, classless, raceless, and cultureless creature; although male, unless otherwise specified" (Amsden p.13).

When the individual is exercising freedom of choice, in order to maximize utility, the major economic consideration is seen as that of income and prices. Thus Mincer attempts to explain the increased economic activity rate of married women in terms of these economic variables. The decision to engage in paid work amongst women, Mincer notes, differs from that decision for men since a woman's time is not simply divided between work and leisure - domestic labour adds another dimension. Thus the principle that "an increase in the wage rate normally results in a decreased amount (hours) of work offered by suppliers of labour" (p.41) has to be modified since an increase in the wage rates of women makes both consumption of leisure and

the production of home services more costly. A wife's income can be used to substitute market goods for home production, e.g. convenience foods and labour saving devices. Thus, according to Mincer, a rational choice would encourage increased waged work if substitution of home production is possible. The increased earnings of women during the twentieth century attracted them into paid employment particularly since the opportunity costs of both their domestic labour and leisure rose.

Mincer's analysis concentrates exclusively, therefore, on economic factors which may influence the supply of labour and no consideration is given to social influences or the demand for workers. Similarly the inferior earnings of women are perceived, by most neoclassical theorists, to be the result of individual deficiency and the possibility of injustice is ignored. Women's lower wages and flatter earnings profiles are ascribed to their smaller 'investment' in human capital which is related to women's role within the family. The division of labour within the family is, however, perceived to be consistent with 'economic maximizing principles'.

According to neoclassical theory, people marry because in so doing they increase their utility ... Marriage is conceptualized as 'a two-person firm with either member being the 'entrepreneur' who 'hires' the other at ... (a) 'salary' ... and receives residual 'profits' (Becker, 1974). Women hire men as breadwinners since men earn more than women in the market (women's earning powers are diminished by their childrearing activities). Men hire women as nursemaids since women bear children and are superior at rearing them (men's childrearing powers are diminished by their market earning activities). (Amaden p.15)

Thus the division of labour is perceived as advantageous, it is assumed that a woman's primary role is within the family and as a result, it is argued, women 'invest' less in their paid employment.

According to neoclassical theory women's lower 'investment' in human capital occurs for two reasons. Firstly, because it is anticipated that a woman's paid employment will be disrupted by family responsibilities both she and employers are reluctant to invest in the woman's training.

Since job-related investment in human capital commands a return which is received at work, the shorter the expected and actual duration of work experience, the weaker the incentives to augment job skills over the life cycle. With labor-force attachment of married women lasting, on average, about one-half that of men, labor-market activities of women are less likely to contain skill training and learning components as a result both of women's own decisions and decisions of employers who may be expected to invest in worker skills to some extent. (Mincer and Polachek p.174).

Also, it is argued that skills and training acquired by a woman at school and at work depreciate when she is not engaged in paid employment and "when market skills are eroded by depreciation, earning power declines" (Mincer and Polachek p.174).

Thus, according to Mincer and Polachek, women themselves are responsible for their inferior earning capacity. Women earn less because they 'invest' less in human capital. Their small 'investment' results from the discontinuous employment patterns of women because of family commitments but it is argued that marriage increases their utility. No analysis of the labour market is offered and the fact that, in addition to being concentrated in low paid jobs, women are over-represented in a limited range of occupations and industries is ignored. Attention is focused exclusively upon the individual and the possibility that women invest less in human capital because their 'investments' are not recognised or because of discrimination is not considered.

In addition to receiving less pay than men women, on average, are experiencing increasingly higher rates of (both registered and unregistered) unemployment and neoclassical theory again perceives this situation as the responsibility of women and the result of interruption of waged labour in order to bear and raise children. Thus, in conclusion of her survey into why women in the United States have experienced higher rates of unemployment than men in the post-war period, Beth Niemi writes:

The most important reason for the relatively high rate of female unemployment is the extensive movement of women into and out of the labor force. (p.349).

Since the individual worker is the focus of attention within neoclassical theory, and since little attention is given to examining the structure of the labour market, the possibility of discrimination is severely understated. Where employers favour the employment of white men because they believe blacks and women to be less reliable or less qualified this discrimination is considered rational because of the high costs of eliminating such stereotypical judgments by obtaining information about individual applicants (see Phelps). Where neoclassical theorists perceive discrimination to be irrational, in that it results from 'tastes', they predict that such discrimination will be eradicated under competitive conditions.

Empirical Sociological Studies

Less complacent about the inferior position of women than the above theory of women's work is the approach of the empirical sociological studies which have appeared since Myrdal and Klein's pioneering work Women's Two Roles was published in 1956. While the focus of attention of these studies ranges from specifically looking at Working Mothers and their Children (Yudkin and

Holme) to considering only women in professional occupations (Fogarty, Rapaport and Rapaport) or older women (Le Gros Clark), they share a similar orientation to the subject. Thus while these studies are mildly critical of the existing state of affairs, and frequently policy orientated, they start from the assumption that waged work amongst women, especially married women, is problematic. Indeed employment amongst women is perceived as giving rise to problems:

for the women themselves in combining their two roles; for the employer in coping with higher rates of absence and labour turnover, and demands for part-time work; for the social services in providing for the care of children of working mothers, or in coping with the supposed results of maternal neglect for husbands and other kin in taking over part of the roles of wife and mother; and even for the sociologist in attempting to discern the 'motivation' of women in paid employment. (Brown, 1976, p. 27)

Thus women workers are assumed to be "a race apart and as alien to 'real' industry" (Novarra p.65). Employed women are perceived as causing, and experiencing, problems which are simply not seen as relevant to male employees, to the extent that a summary of Pearl Jephcott's findings sets out to show that employers need not be fearful about the problems of employing married women" (Novarra p.65).

Employment amongst married women is defined as problematic because the women themselves are seen as experiencing tension between their role in the family and position in the labour force. Thus, as has been argued, the contradiction between women's role as domestic labourer and that of wage worker is reduced to a subjective tension between the two roles and no analysis of the foundation of these conflicts is attempted. The sexual division of labour is taken as given and its relationship to the organization of

society is largely ignored. Thus, while attention is concentrated on the role conflict experienced by employed women, it appears to be taken for granted that men can engage in waged work without experiencing role conflict. Moreover, since analysis is reduced to the level of the individual, and because of the concentration on normative expectations, the economic role of women's waged work and domestic labour is not considered. Indeed, because no analysis of the labour process is attempted these studies have remained largely descriptive. Thus while information is provided about the factors which influence women's decision as to whether or not to engage in waged work, and the problems they experience when they work, these sociological studies do not analyse the concentration of female labour within particular occupations and industries nor offer any explanation as to why women are paid less than men.

These studies see employment amongst married women as a permanent feature of society and acknowledge married women as a vital source of labour. Indeed they argue that every effort should be made to facilitate the return of women to the labour market. Increased nursery provision, maternity leave and a restructuring of employment to take account of the lives of women by developing more flexible hours of work and part-time employment are suggested. The basic sexual divisions of labour are not, however, challenged and part-time work for women is perceived as the ideal solution.

The overall orientation of the studies is to define women workers as a problem and it is not questioned how far capitalist production actually needs a supply of cheap, flexible labour which is available in the form of

women workers. As Beechey has argued, "these empirical studies have no analysis of the ways in which the capitalist labour process structures the organisation of work and the demand for labour, on the one hand, nor of the basis of the sexual division of labour and its relationship to the labour process on the other hand" (1975). The studies appear to share the belief that the inferior position of women within the labour market is simply the result of backward attitudes and policies which can be eliminated through education and policy changes.

The distinct social-sexual relations of women and men, both in the family and at work, are obscured by a functionalist notion of social roles which allegedly flow from biology (women's reproductive capacity) on the one hand, and technological innovation (mechanization) on the other ... Both biology and technology are treated as natural or at least asocial phenomena, and as such remain unquestioned ... In the combined presence of progressive technology and biological inevitability, the source of 'inequality' can only be attributed to backward attitudes and expectations, residues of 'the past', or of 'tradition' ... If attitudes and expectations are simply old-fashioned ideas then they can be legislated away. Alexander Introl. to Herzog p.151

The Dual Labour Market Approach

In stark contrast to neoclassical theory and the sociological studies described above the dual labour market approach locates the subordination of women within an analysis of the labour market. The theory emphasises the inferior position of women within employment and challenges the neoclassical assumption that workers are allocated to occupational positions purely by the operation of market forces. The concentration of women, and immigrant and black workers, within predominantly unskilled and low paid employment is seen as the result of de facto discriminatory policies by employers rather than as the result of individual deficiencies.

Fundamental to the theory of the dual labour market is the proposition that the labour market is segmented into a number of different structures. Thus Barron and Norris, who specifically apply the concept of a dual labour market to the employment of women in Britain, argue that the labour market in developed capitalist societies is divided into primary and secondary sectors. The primary sector comprises relatively high paid and stable jobs with good fringe benefits, working conditions and opportunities for advancement. Secondary sector jobs, by contrast, have relatively low earning levels, inferior working conditions, are unstable, and provide negligible opportunities for advancement. Mobility between the primary and secondary sectors is restricted since within the primary sector recruitment to higher positions is predominantly from lower positions within the same hierarchy and not from the external labour market. Secondary sector jobs offer few opportunities for vertical movement since they are not tied to a promotional structure and mobility for these workers is horizontal between industries and occupations.

Among theorists who acknowledge the existence of a segmented labour market there is disagreement as to the reasons for its emergence. The major divergence is between those who emphasise technological developments, and the resulting importance of employee stability among certain sectors of workers, and the more radical approach which attributes the origins of stratification to the capitalists' need to divide and rule the labour force. Thus, Doeringer and Piore argue that employee stability, among certain workers, has become increasingly important as technology and workers' skills have become less general and more firm specific. Employers have, as a

result, attempted to promote employee stability, within jobs which require considerable manpower investment, by providing high wages and good employment conditions within an attractive promotional structure. Where employee stability is not necessary, however, wages remain low, promotion prospects are few and security of employment is not assured. This need of employers to retain skilled labour is also recognised by the radical theorists (e.g. Gordon and Rubery) but they focus attention on the role of stratification in reducing working class unity. Fear of a united working class increased as the development of factory production produced a more homogeneous workforce and stratification of the labour force reduced the likelihood of the growth of class consciousness.

First, the existence of a lower stratum increases the status and status orientation of those in the higher strata. Second, workers in the upper strata are unlikely to identify with the interests of the blacks and women concentrated in menial occupations, and thus low wages can be paid to these workers without risk of class opposition (Rubery p. 20).

The significance of the dual labour market approach to understanding the position of women wage labourers is that it has been argued that "women are the main secondary workforce in Britain" (Barron and Norris p. 4). Barron and Norris isolate "five main attributes that may make a particular social group or category a likely source of secondary workers: dispensability, clear visible social difference, little interest in acquiring training, low economism and lack of solidarity" (p. 53) and argue that women have each of these attributes.

While it is true that there is a high degree of occupational segregation between men and women in the British labour market and that women are concentrated in jobs which Barron and Norris identify as secondary sector

employment women receive less pay than men, have fewer opportunities for promotion, and are more likely than men to be made redundant; there are certain problems in their analysis. As Beechey has noted, the correlation which Barron and Norris argue exists between the attributes of secondary workers and those of women is problematic "partly because little evidence is offered that these attributes actually are significant in concrete situations: the suggestion that women possess them relies heavily upon inference from stereotypical assumptions, and such a suggestion also casts doubt on their general claim that women's position can be explained in terms which are internal to the labour market" (Beechey 1978, p.174). From the five attributes listed by Barron and Norris only one, lack of solidarity (which is seen as resulting from the fact that many women work part-time and are concentrated in small establishments), arises intrinsically from the labour market situation of women. Indeed the list indicates the importance of the family in determining the characteristics possessed by women entering the labour market. Consequently it is difficult to understand why Barron and Norris dismiss the household sexual division of labour as 'an explanatory factor which contributes to, but does not itself determine, the differentiation between the sexes in the work roles' (Barron and Norris p.47) and instead concentrate on the internal dynamics of the labour market as the determinant factor in explaining the position of women wage labourers.

Moreover, by classifying work according to only two stark divisions, primary and secondary sectors, important characteristics of work performed by women are ignored. Women workers are concentrated horizontally in predominantly low skilled and poorly paid jobs, and also vertically in

particular industries and occupations which frequently have some structural resemblance to women's role in the family

The patriarchal relation is reproduced at work: men don't do secretarial work; sexual attractiveness continues to be a part of what they are selling when they sell their labour power; men treat them as, and often the work involves them as, 'substitute wives'. (Bland et. al. p.63).

The dual labour market approach to women's work does not explain why women are concentrated vertically in particular occupations.

Indeed the dual labour market analysis is general descriptive, rather than explanatory, 'more a rationalisation of the present structure ... than an explanation of how this was arrived at' (Rubery p.18). As both Beechey and Rubery have argued, one reason why the analysis can only be partial is because of the 'almost exclusive attention paid to the actions and motivations of the capitalists in developing a structured labour market, and the consequent neglect of the role of worker organization in this process' (Rubery p.18). On the one hand, worker organization can act as an important constraint on capital's capacity to pursue a rational labour market strategy and, on the other, it can be argued that workers themselves actually participated in the formation of structured labour markets.

Workers' defence against competition in the labour market is to organize to control the supply of labour. Attempts may be made at the macro level to limit the supply of new types of labour, such as females or immigrants. More importantly, workers will organize to control entry into an occupation, firm or industry. Such control must be to the detriment of groups excluded from the organized sectors, as it reduces their mobility and may even increase competition in the external labour market. The development of worker organization may thus create segmentation in the external labour market ... The existence of a structured labour force, where jobs are strictly defined and workers are not interchangeable, provides a bargaining base for labour against management attempts to increase productivity and introduce new technology. (Rubery p.29)

The dual labour market theory makes an important contribution to understanding women's waged work by emphasising that women's employment situation is inferior to white men's (aspects of women's employment are shared by black men) and by locating the reasons for this inequality in terms of the dynamics of the labour market and de facto discrimination by employers. It thus challenges the neoclassical approach which perceives inequality as the result of individual deficiency, and the approach of empirical sociology which emphasizes the importance of women's role in the family but does not provide any analysis of the labour market. Thus, while theories of the dual labour market relegate women's position in the family to the status of an exogenous variable and attempt to understand women's employment solely in terms of an analysis of the labour market, sociological studies focus almost exclusively upon women's position in the family. As Beechey (1978), and others, have argued what is needed is a theory which combines an analysis of the organization of the labour process with a consideration of sexual divisions within the family since:

the central feature of women's position under capitalism is not their role simply as domestic workers, but rather that they are both domestic and wage labourers. It is this dual and contradictory role that imparts a specific dynamic to their situation. (Coulson et. al.)

Women's Domestic Labour

Capital benefits from the dual roles of women and, unlike the theories already considered which do not question how far capitalist production is dependant upon the work of women, it is the aim of Marxist Feminists to demonstrate the ways in which capital benefits from women's unpaid domestic labour and from the availability of the unskilled, cheap and flexible paid

work of women. Thus, Marxist Feminists have counteracted the predominant orientation in sociology, which defines women's position in the family in purely cultural terms, by emphasising the economically important role of domestic labour in the reproduction of labour power. Consequently the fundamental question within the recent debate about domestic labour has been 'what function does women's role in the family serve for capitalism'.

Despite disagreements, contributors to the domestic labour debate agree that women's unpaid labour in the home is necessary for the regeneration of labour power:

This takes place on a generational basis in the production of new labourers, and encompasses all the work involved in bearing and rearing children. It also occurs on a daily basis in the form of servicing the wage labourer so that he (that is, the husband) can appear for work fed, clothed, laundered, soothed and untrammelled by responsibilities for childcare. Although these tasks could be dealt with by others - the labourer himself or paid workers - the cost is much lower if they are undertaken by the housewife. (Barrett p.174)

Moreover, in addition to servicing the physical needs of the family, women's unpaid domestic work, it is argued, also fulfils a crucial ideological role. Domestic labour socialises children into appropriate roles, and provides warmth and affection which cushion the wage labourer against the alienation of waged work and provide an incentive for his role as breadwinner.

While there is no controversy over the fact that domestic labour provides use values for the maintenance and reproduction of labour power there are many disputed points within the domestic labour debate of which the most discussed are: 'Does domestic labour produce value?' and 'Is capitalism likely to socialize this work?'

As to whether domestic labour is socially productive work the argument

ranges from the assertion that the only feature that distinguishes women's unpaid work in the home from other forms of work is that it is unpaid (Della Costa and James) to the contention that "housework under capitalism ... remains a specific labour to which the concept of abstract labour does not apply" (Coulson et. al. p.13). "to compare domestic labour with wage labour is not comparing like with like" (P.E.W.C. p.10). Thus while Della Costa and James are adamant that the housewife produces surplus value directly since she produces labour power which is a value creating commodity, others argue that domestic labour does not directly produce, but rather contributes to the production of, surplus value. For example, Secombe proposes that domestic labour produces surplus value only indirectly since the commodity it creates, value power, does not realize the value created by the housewife until it is exchanged on the market place. Similarly Gardiner argues that although domestic labour is not directly involved in the production of surplus value it nevertheless contributes to surplus value by keeping down necessary labour, or the value of labour power, to a level that is lower than the actual subsistence level of the working class" (1975, p.54). Her argument is that:

wages do not include payment for the full costs of reproducing the labour force but only for the costs of the commodities purchased and consumed by workers' families. Put another way, housewives perform surplus value on the assumption that the average labour time spent by them in caring for their families exceeds the labour embodied in commodities consumed by them out of their husband's wage packet. (1976, p.114).

While this debate is valuable in terms of the recognition it gives to the economic value of domestic labour, however, the emphasis on housework's relationship with the value of labour power has tended to obscure its

connection with women's waged work. As Coulson et. al. have argued, the fundamental characteristic of women's position within capitalism is that they perform both domestic and waged work and they draw attention to the changing relationship between these roles over time. Similarly, in discussing the possibility of capitalism socializing domestic labour, Gardiner (1975), argues that different economic pressures will dominate in different phases of capitalist development. Thus:

at a time of economic crisis such as the present, when a major requirement of capital is to hold down the level of wages, domestic labour performs a vital economic function and further socialization of housework or childcare would be detrimental from a capitalist point of view. However, other pressures (e.g. the need for women wage workers or the need to expand markets for workers' consumption) might lead to further socialization of housework and childcare in a period of capitalist expansion ... (Moreover) there may be conflicting pressures amongst capitalists, e.g. between those who require an expanding female labour force or whose profitability is related to sales of consumption goods to workers and those whose major concern is to hold down wages. (Gardiner, 1975, pp. 55 & 58).

If the essential feature of women's position within capitalism is that they are both domestic and wage labourers, a major criticism of the recent domestic labour debate is that the relationship between these roles has been obscured. Moreover, the debate has given little recognition to the fact that the relationship between these roles is both historically and culturally specific. In different periods of capitalist production the emphasis has shifted between women as domestic labourers and waged workers. Catherine Hall describes a brief period during the 1830s and 1840s when, as a result of the large scale introduction of power looms, it was women and children, rather than men, who were employed, and men's position as the breadwinner and the head of the household was briefly challenged. Also, there

was a marked shift in emphasis in the two roles of women between the Second World War and the Post-War period (see Chapter 4), and this thesis illustrates the cultural differences in West Indian, white and Asian society. While West Indian culture actually encourages waged work amongst women Asian culture defines the role of women as almost exclusively that of domestic labourers. Cultural differences in the definition of gender roles are significant. Thus the following brief description of the ideology of the family in Britain is not automatically applicable to other cultures but it serves to illustrate the fact that although the dual roles of women are contradictory they are also mutually reinforcing so that women's position in the labour market influences and is influenced by her position in the family.

Waged Work and the Family

During the 19th century the idea of the family, comprising a dependent wife, whose main task was to care for the home and children, and a wage-earning husband became increasingly popular amongst the middle classes (Hall, Scott and Tilly, Aries) and remains dominant in Britain today. Women are defined as primarily wives and mothers and girls are socialized to view marriage as their ultimate goal which is more important than any occupational success. Thus within school girls are taught various 'feminine skills' and the importance of the 'home making' aspect of the education of girls, particularly those defined as less able, is stressed in both the 1959 Crowther Report and the 1963 Newsom Report (see Chapter 4). Education reinforces sexual divisions (Sharpe) and even the informal cultural system of, particularly working class, girls emphasises their 'femaleness', their sexuality and their future role as wives (Pollert, McRobbie). They are

absorbed in a culture of femininity in which fashion, romance and ultimately marriage are the priority and waged work has little status. This sexual stereotyping is encouraged by advertisements, magazines etc. and Pollert contrasts this emphasis on marriage with the positive, and in fact ironic, ideological preparation boys undergo for a future of unskilled work ... While heavy manual work can be culturally appropriated by working class men to celebrate maleness and machismo, the so-called 'light' manual work of women cannot be subjectively understood as in any way complementary to their sexual or class self-image (p.95/7). Whereas boys often commence manual work with a feeling of temporary euphoria (see William the factory girls in Pollert's study were immediately on the defensive and, recognising the inferiority of 'women's work', they viewed waged labour as a short interlude before the escape of marriage. Waged work was perceived as temporary.

Thus, girls are socialized to view marriage as their ultimate 'career' and women are seen as primarily wives and mothers. Their role is defined as creating a home which is a warm and loving place where men can be revitalized after the dehumanizing effects of waged work. As the women quoted by Pollert demonstrate, however, home does not provide an escape from work for women: waged work is simply replaced by domestic labour. Waged work, moreover, is always placed secondary to their domestic role. Thus, "we have to leave paid work when we have babies or our husbands and children are ill; when our husbands move their jobs to another area when our husbands express displeasure at our paid work, and so on" (W.T.I p.45). Women are denied equal access to work and are confined to inferior jobs with no prospects of training, since it is assumed that they will interrupt

waged work because of domestic responsibilities. Moreover, because women are assumed to be the financial dependents of men they are paid less than men who are assumed to be financially supporting a family. This ideology remains despite the fact that "few working class households have historically been organized around dependence on a male breadwinning wage and the earnings of other family members have usually been essential to maintain the household" (Barrett p. 64), and in 1971 one-sixth of all households were dependent upon a woman's income (Laud, p. 55). Thus a large number of women are financially compelled to engage in wage labour and the assumption, of young women, that waged work will be a temporary stage before marriage and children fades. Rather, waged work is combined with domestic labour.

Women's subordinate position within waged work reinforces their role within the family in that low female earnings and poor work opportunities encourage women to marry. Thus "girls socialization in our society reflects and reinforces the structure of work opportunities for women: the work experience of women is the outcome of the interaction between the priorities and values which result from socialization, and the opportunities which exist in the labour market" (Brown, 1978, p. 33). Women earn approximately two-thirds as much as men and thus, despite the increased rate of employment among women, economic dependence on marriage has continued. Moreover, the majority of women work part-time and consequently they are subject to the low pay and insecurity of this form of employment (see Chapter 3). Because it is assumed that women are financially supported by men, low pay and prospects are justified and as a result women workers' economic dependence on marriage has been maintained.

Thus a dual and somewhat contradictory process has been at work in which on the one hand more and more women have come to depend directly on the sale of their own labour power for all but a small portion of their adult lives whilst, on the other hand, dependence on marriage and commitment to domestic responsibilities has also spread to increasing numbers of women. (Cardiner, 1971, p.150).

Also, as Cardiner (1971) has pointed out, the sexual division of labour within waged work is an important factor in maintaining women's subordination to men in society as a whole since, no matter how limited their control over the labour process, men frequently have authority and control over women workers (p.141).

The position of women in production must be seen in the context of women in the family since their inferior position within production reinforces some aspects of women's inferior role within the family and vice versa. Moreover, it can be argued that this situation is advantageous to both men and capital since men benefit from higher wages, greater authority and the domestic division of labour while capital benefits from women's unpaid domestic labour and from their cheap and flexible waged labour. Indeed one author, Veronica Beechey (1967 and 1975) has gone as far as to suggest that married women constitute capital's preferred source of the industrial reserve army because they provide cheap and disposable labour.

Women as an Industrial Reserve Army

The employment of married women, Beechey argues, can be economically advantageous to capital in three ways. Firstly, since there is a tendency for the value of labour power to be reduced the more members of a family enter production, employment amongst married women lowers the value of labour power overall. Secondly Beechey suggests that female labour power

has a lower value than male labour power because women receive less training and because married women are partly dependent on their husbands for the costs of reproducing their labour power. Finally she argues that married women workers are similar to semi-proletarianised workers from the point of view of capital:

since they too can be paid wages at a price which is below the value of labour power. In the case of married women, it is their dependence upon male wages within the family for part of the costs of production and reproduction of labour power which accounts for the possibility of individual capitals paying wages which are below the value of labour power. The married woman does not, therefore, have to pay for the entire costs of reproducing her labour power, nor for that of her children who will become the next generation of wage labourers and domestic labourers. This argument, if correct, can explain why women's wages are significantly lower than men's. (Beechey, 1977, p.53).

Moreover since women are paid significantly less than men they may act as a competitive force on wage levels.

Similarly, it is because of the role of women in the family and the assumption that this is their primary role, that married women constitute a disposable and flexible labour force.

married women have a world of their very own, the family, into which they can disappear when discarded from production, without being eligible for state benefits, and without appearing in unemployment statistics (unless they sign on). (Beechey, 1977, p.57).

Certainly employers can generally reduce their female labour force more easily and cheaply than male employees. Women are less likely to be eligible for redundancy payments, they are not as well organized as men, and because of their role in the family women leave employment for domestic reasons. Thus women workers are more flexible and open to manipulation

than male workers and this is particularly evident in the case of part-time employment.

Because of the role of women in the family Beechey stresses that the existence of the family must be presupposed for women to present the advantages to capital that she outlines: therefore women workers, it is argued, provide a cheaper and more flexible supply of labour than male workers. One possibility of this is that, because of their lower rates of pay, women will be substituted for men in order to reduce costs in a period of recession. Alternatively, because of their flexibility, women workers may be brought in and thrown out of waged labour as the interests of capital dictate. Historical evidence suggests that both possibilities are too simplistic, and the major criticism of the industrial reserve army model is that it does not recognize the sexual segregation of labour which prevents the substitution of female for male, and male for female labour.

On the first point there appears to be some dispute as to whether women have been used to substitute men's labour. Jane Humphries (1976) suggests that this was in fact the case during the Great Depression and Jean Gardiner writes that "there has been some substitution of female for male labour (and part-time labour for full-time labour), suggesting that the hypothesis that women are used in a crisis to cheapen labour costs has some validity" (1976, p.15). However, it seems unlikely that this substitution has taken place on any large scale and Gardiner, in the same article, acknowledges that "women have not to any great extent acted as substitutes for male labour in declining or stagnant sectors of employment. Nor has there been any tendency towards a breakdown in the sexual division of labour. The majority of jobs, both new and old, have developed as 'men's work' or as

'women's work' (p.12). Indeed, as Bruegel has noted (p.14) substitution of women for men is more prevalent in a period of expansion rather than recession and it is possibly that women are simply more readily introduced into sectors which continue to expand rather than are used as substitutes in declining sectors.

Certainly the sexual segregation of occupations creates an inflexibility in the female labour force which the reserve army thesis does not imply. This is stressed by Ruth Milkman who argues that because women are concentrated in a small number of occupations the impact of the recession on women has been limited. "Put very simply: if all typists and cleaners are female (which is virtually the case) it is implausible to suggest that they can all be dispensed with" (Barrett p.151). Thus the crucial factor which will determine the differential effects of a recession on the employment of men and women is the extent to which 'men's work' and 'women's work' is affected. Women have therefore been somewhat protected in the post-war decades because of the vast expansion of the service sector which is predominantly defined as 'women's work'. Thus despite a 10 per cent decline in manufacturing jobs amongst women they have been reabsorbed in the service sector and the result is that:

Between 1960 and 1974 the number of women employed in all industries and services rose by about 1,000,000, while the number of male employees in employment declined by nearly 1,250,000. Thus the proportion of women amongst total employees has risen during this period of economic crisis (from 37% to 40%). Overall therefore women have not been acting as an industrial reserve army and their employment has continued to expand. (Gardiner 1976 p.13).

Moreover, the argument that married women form a particularly flexible supply of labour, because of their role in the family, is not substantiated

by the unemployment statistics since unemployment amongst single women has increased faster than amongst married women (Bruegel p.15).

Irene Bruegel has considered the reserve army model in relation to the period 1974-1978 and concludes that although the expansion of the service sector has mitigated the effects of the crisis on women's employment opportunities "Individually, women have been more susceptible to redundancy when compared to men in similar circumstances" and she shows that in every industry where a large proportion of women were employed and where work declined between 1974 and 1977 the employment decline was greater for women relative to men (Bruegel p.12 and 16). Also, Bruegel points out that it is part-time women workers who have suffered job losses most severely (p.18) and this substantiates the argument, demonstrated in Chapter 8 of this thesis, that part-time workers are frequently employed to cover a short lived boom and are subsequently disposed of with ease. Thus, women are sometimes employed as an industrial reserve army and the Second World War is an example, albeit peculiar (see Milkman), of this phenomena. However, as it stands the industrial reserve model is somewhat simplistic and needs qualification.

While the industrial reserve model illustrates valid similarities between the situation of married women waged workers and that of semi-proletarianized migrant workers the parallel cannot be taken too far.

(The woman's) costs of education and upbringing before marriage, and of reproduction generally afterwards are met within the capitalist economy itself through the state, her parents' wages and her husband's wage or state benefit. As such, these costs (however much lowered by her domestic labour) are met by collective capital, as well as through wages and taxation, and this is an important difference, from the point of view of capital, between her and a migrant worker whose costs can be met entirely by the peripheral economy. (Barrett p.159-0).

Moreover the industrial reserve thesis underestimates the significance of sexual divisions within the labour market and the fact that:

definitions of men's work and women's work have remained relatively inflexible not least because of much lower rates of women's pay. Thus where a traditionally male industry is declining and the expanding industries employ predominantly female labour, high male unemployment is unlikely to bring about a substitution of male for female labour. (Gardiner, Spare Rib, 19)

However women are sometimes used as an industrial reserve army and the theory appears to be supported if it is applied on a firm by firm, or industry by industry, basis. In short, "the reserve army of labour model holds, but the simple version needs qualification" (Bruegel p.12).

Limitations to Marxist Analyses

Similarly functionalist Marxist approaches to women's work, both domestic and waged, which attempt to explain women's subordinate position in terms of the needs of capitalism (An example is provided by the Revolutionary Communist Group who identify women's oppression as created by and functional for capitalism) are inadequate in that they obscure the gender divisions of precapitalism and ignore the struggles of the male working class. The Marxist analysis "explains why a hierarchy of labour is necessary within the waged workforce, but tells us nothing about why women end up at the bottom of this hierarchy ... Hence the need for an additional theory of the patriarchal relations which assign women to subordinate places in the social hierarchy" (Taylor and Phillips p.81). This is not to argue that the role of women is unrelated to the changing demands of capitalist production, nor to deny that capitalism benefits from women's subordinate position. As Barrett has argued, capitalism did not create domestic

labour, or the 'feminine areas of wage labour' and the relationship between the two "evolved through a process in which pre-capitalist distinctions have become entrenched into the structure of capitalist relations of production" (p.123). Thus, while women's unpaid domestic labour and low paid waged work is advantageous to capital, they cannot be explained purely in terms of the 'needs' of capitalism and it is necessary to consider pre-capitalist gender divisions and also to examine the ways in which organized men maintained their superior position relative to women.

Heidi Hartmann argues that a system of male dominance over women was established before the emergence of capitalism and that, with the advent of public-private separation, men simply had to maintain control of women's labour power. In support of her argument Hartmann reviews the anthropological evidence on the creation of male dominance and concludes that "most anthropologists agree that patriarchy¹ emerged long before capitalism, even if they disagree about its origins. Moreover she notes that there is considerable historical evidence to suggest that within the preindustrial family men were considered the head of the household and women subordinate (p.149). Certainly the available information indicates that a sexual division of labour operated before factory production (see Clark) and, although sexual differentiation of tasks is not necessarily inequalitarian, within family industry men tended to perform what was considered the more skilled work while women processed the raw materials or finished the end

1. Hartmann defines patriarchy as a set of social relations which has a material base and in which there are hierarchical relations between men, and solidarity among them, which enable them to control women. Patriarchy is thus the system of male oppression of women" (p.138)

product. Moreover:

Men, usually the heads of production units; had the status of master artisans. For though women usually belonged to their husbands' guilds, they did so as appendages; girls were rarely apprenticed to a trade and thus rarely became journeymen or masters. Married women participated in the production process and probably acquired important skills, but they usually controlled the production process only if they were widowed, when guilds often gave them the right to hire apprentices and journeymen ... girls appear not to have been trained as carefully as boys were and, as adults, not to have attained the same status in guilds. (Hartmann p.150).

Many of the trades which were defined as 'women's work' did not have strong guilds because the skills, which related to women's role in the family, could not be easily monopolized. Thus women tended to be less well organized which placed them at a severe disadvantage as industrialization progressed. Not only could men maintain a monopoly in trades which had an exclusively male membership but they were able to take over preserves of women, e.g. midwifery. Moreover since the beginnings of industrial capitalism women frequently received lower pay than men. Even where pay differentials are justified in terms of skill the objective status of definitions of skill can be questioned. As Taylor and Phillips have argued, definitions of skill are frequently interwoven with sexual bias and bear little relation to the actual amount of ability necessary - 'women's work' is often defined as inferior simply because it is women who perform it. The extent to which a trade is defined as skilled frequently depends on the ability of its members to insist on that definition. Women were at a severe disadvantage in that they appear to have been less well organized than men who have employed the concept of 'skill' to raise the wages of certain categories of workers while reinforcing the vulnerable position of

women workers. In this way the organized working class, which has historically been overwhelmingly representative of white males, has not reduced the economic advantages to capital of women workers. Similarly, when threatened by the employment of women workers as agents of deskilling the reaction of the organized working class has been to exclude women from the labour force and Hartmann argues that the explanation as to why this strategy has been adopted, rather than that of organizing women workers, relates to patriarchal relations between men and women: men wanted to assure that women would continue to perform appropriate tasks at home (p.155). Certainly repeated demands for a 'family wage' indicate acceptance of an ideology which locates women centrally within the family and ... neither the family nor ideology can be seen as imposed on a passive working class, rather as phenomena it plays a part in forging (Foreman in W.T.I. p.47).

The Family Wage

The concept of the family wage developed early in the 19th century and was based on the bourgeois family form in which, ideally, the wife and children were supported by a male breadwinner. Middle class women were not expected to engage in any economic activity since the status and dignity of men was dependent upon their wives and daughters not working outside the home. As Land has written, "it is difficult to know how far skilled and organized working class men, that is the labour aristocracy, accepted this form of marriage relationship as an ideal or merely couched their arguments in terms which would appeal to the social reformers and some sections of the capitalist class in order to further their own ends" (p.57). Certainly

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acceptance of a sexual division of labour can be seen to be advantageous from the point of view of men in that the exclusion of women from the labour market would improve the bargaining position of men, and the confinement of women to the house endowed men with certain domestic advantages. Alternatively, Humphries (1977) has argued that in fighting for a family wage working class men protected the integrity of the family which she sees as an important mutual support system and thus of benefit to the working class. This latter approach, however, presents a romanticised view of the family and ignores the subordinate role of women within the institution (see Barrett and McIntosh 1980).

Men have consistently defended the assumption of male breadwinner and dependent housewife and in 1909:

The Labour Party Conference and TUC Congress debated resolutions to prohibit married women from keening or taking paid employment outside the home - women were accused of taking jobs away from men, undercutting their wages, neglecting their children and their husbands, and encouraging their husbands to be idle (Land p.61).

Similarly, opposition to the introduction of family allowances indicated that the image of the male breadwinner must not be challenged and this was reaffirmed recently with "the controversy over the switch 'from wallet to purse' when child benefits paid to the mother took the place of family allowances and child tax allowances, (which) shows that the view that men are responsible for maintaining their children and have a right to control the money coming into the family is still very strongly held" (Land p.71)

As Hartmann has argued:

Historically, male workers have been instrumental in limiting the participation of women in the labor market. Male unions have carried out the policies and attitudes of the earlier guilds, and they have continued to reap benefits

for male workers. Capitalists inherited job segregation by sex, but they have quite often been able to use it to their own advantage. If they can supersede experienced men with cheaper women, so much the better. If they can weaken labor by threatening to do so, that's good, too. Or, if failing that, they can use those status differences to reward men, and buy their allegiance to capitalism with patriarchal benefits, that's okay too. (p166).

Men established control over the labour of women before the advent of capitalism and the techniques of dominance and organization they developed, because of their superior position in the family, enabled men to maintain control during the emergence of capitalism. The continued existence of gender ideology in socialist societies further supports the view that women's subordination is not determined solely by the 'needs' of capitalism. Certainly capital does benefit from the sexual division of labour but it was not created with the advent of capitalism which simply incorporated pre-capitalist gender divisions into the structure of capitalist relations of production. "Thus it is incorrect to see the nature of women's subordination as either determined by the economic and political 'needs' of capitalism or the result of class struggle: women's subordination under capitalism lies in the articulation between patriarchal relations and capitalist development" (W.T.I. p.48).

Summary

One of the main inadequacies of the approaches to women's work discussed in this Chapter, therefore, is that they do not consider the role of both capitalists and male workers in instituting and maintaining the inferior situation of women. Neoclassical theory explains women's position in terms of the operation of market forces and individual deficiency while the approach of empirical sociology concentrates on the 'problems' of

women's employment which relates to their role in the family; no analysis of the labour market is offered. The dual labour market approach, on the other hand, locates the reasons for women's inequality in terms of the dynamics of the labour market but it virtually ignores the role of women in the family and overemphasizes the role of capitalists while ignoring the actions of male workers in perpetuating segmentation. While the domestic labour debate emphasizes the economic contribution to capital of women's role in the family it tends to obscure the relationship between this role and that of waged worker. The industrial reserve army model considers the inter-relationship between the dual roles of women but occupational segregation by sex limits the extent to which women can function as a flexible supply of labour. Also, in some cases the Marxist approach describes a simple functional 'fit' between the role of women and the needs of capitalism which ignores the operation of patriarchy.

Differences and Divisions

All the approaches to women's work described in this Chapter treat women as a homogeneous group and fail to consider differences between them. While acknowledging rigid gender divisions within the labour market and the fact that women workers generally share similar characteristics in terms of their employment positions I would argue that variables, in addition to sex, cannot be ignored. The employment position of women in general is very different from that of men but there are also differences between women workers of different classes, ages, domestic situations and cultural backgrounds. All these factors are influential but the particular focus of this thesis is on the relative importance of gender versus culture and race.

In order to assess the significance of culture it is necessary to look at the employment position of workers from different cultural backgrounds and since this thesis compares white and black workers this is the division I now consider. As with whites, however, most work on the employment situation of black workers is concerned with men but, although limited, a comparison of white and black males does offer some guidance when considering variations between women. Thus, before examining variations between women, the employment positions of white and black men are compared in order to assess the significance of culture and race differences.

Black Workers

The employment situation of black men in Britain differs in important respects from that of the male population as a whole. Black workers are concentrated in those jobs usually considered most undesirable - jobs rejected by the indigenous population. They are over-represented in manual employment, particularly unskilled and semi-skilled jobs, whilst being largely excluded from professional and management positions and employment which bestows power and authority. Moreover, West Indian and Asian men frequently experience inferior employment conditions, in terms of working environment, hours and earnings. Black men also suffer higher rates of unemployment than British males generally.

Moreover, the employment position of West Indian and Asian males differs not only from the total population but also between these different cultural groups. As with women, men are not a homogeneous mass and exhibit variations in economic activity rates, job levels, industrial and plant composition, working hours, earnings and unemployment. Thus, there are

differences in the employment situation of West Indian, Indian, Pakistani and white men.

Economic Activity Rates

The first major difference in the employment pattern of men of different ethnic backgrounds is in the proportion who are economically active. With the exception of persons born in Germany, immigrant groups included in the 1966 Census exhibit higher economic activity rates than the rate for the total population of Britain (Castles and Kosack p.60). In his report of the 1974 national P.E.P. survey Smith shows that 91 per cent of Asian and West Indian men were working compared with 77 per cent of white British men. As Smith notes, however, this discrepancy is largely explained by the difference in age profile, since migrant workers are younger than the indigenous population, and if men over the age of 54 are excluded the economic activity rates of white and black men are about the same (Smith p.64/5).

Job Levels

The job levels of black males in Britain are substantially lower than those of white men and they are heavily concentrated within manual employment. However, within this overall situation, there are differences within the immigrant groups and indeed between different areas in Britain. As Smith notes, "the gap between Pakistanis and whites is the widest; West Indians come next, followed by Indians, while the gap between African Asians and whites is comparatively small" (p.72). In 1974 51 per cent of Pakistani and Bangladeshi men were employed in semi and unskilled manual work compared with 18 per cent of white men; 32 per cent of West Indian

males, 36 per cent of Indian and 26 per cent of African Asians were engaged in this form of employment. Within skilled employment it is only Pakistani men who were under-represented (33 per cent compared with 42 per cent of white men) while West Indian men had a greater representation than white males (59 per cent). The figures for Asian and African Asian men are comparable with whites (44 per cent). In the field of professional and white collar employment, however, there had been comparatively little penetration by all the minority groups. Thus while 23 per cent of white men were employed in professional and management positions and 17 per cent in white collar jobs the comparable percentages for black men are as follows: West Indians 2 per cent and 6 per cent; Pakistani and Bangladeshi men 4 per cent and 4 per cent; Indians 8 per cent and 12 per cent and African Asians 10 per cent and 20 per cent (Smith p. 72/3).

Despite variations between ethnic groups, therefore, black men in general occupy an inferior labour market position to that of white males and it is in the field of non-manual jobs, especially the better ones, that black men are most severely under-represented. This lack of penetration into non-manual employment cannot be explained, however, by lack of academic qualifications since Asians and West Indians are in inferior jobs to whites with equivalent qualifications. Thus, using a system which tends to understate the qualifications of the minority sample, Smith found that:

Taking those with qualifications to degree standard we find that 79 per cent of the white men are in professional or management positions, compared with only 31 per cent of minority men. Furthermore, 21 per cent of minority men with degree standard qualifications are doing manual jobs (including 3 per cent who are doing unskilled manual jobs), whereas none of the white men with equivalent qualifications are doing manual jobs of any kind ...

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Eighty-three per cent of white men with 'A' levels are doing non-manual jobs, compared with 55 per cent of similarly qualified minority men. Among men whose highest qualification is 'O' level or equivalent, the contrast is again very strong among white men, 33 per cent are doing professional or management jobs, compared with 8 per cent among minority men. (Smith p.75/6).

Within skilled manual employment, however, black men were well represented and there was virtually no difference in job levels between white and black men with formal or informal manual qualifications (e.g. City and Guilds, apprenticeships) except that substantially more of the white men had progressed to non-manual positions (Smith p.76). Thus, the major distortion in the job levels of black men is that they were virtually excluded from the more prestigious non-manual jobs and were concentrated in unskilled and semi-skilled manual employment.

Industrial and Plant Concentration

The concentration of black male workers in semi-skilled and unskilled employment is compatible with their over-representation within certain types of industry, since minority workers tend to be concentrated within industries which have exhibited a consistently high demand for unskilled and semi-skilled labour. Thus while 3.3 per cent of the total population was employed within metal manufacture, 11 per cent of Caribbean and Pakistani men, and 14 per cent of Indian males worked in this industry (Castles p.7). Indeed, in 1974, black men were over-represented within manufacturing industry generally which employed 47 per cent of minority men compared with 33 per cent of white men (Smith p.90). Similarly black men generally were concentrated within transport and communications which employed a high proportion of unskilled and semi-skilled labour relative to other service industries. Fourteen per cent of

Jamaican men, 20 per cent from other Caribbean countries and 11 per cent of Indian men worked in transport and communications compared with 9 per cent of the total population (Castles p.7).

However within these broad general trends there are also variations between the different ethnic groups. While only 2 per cent of the total male population and 2 per cent of West Indian men were employed in the textile industry the comparable figure for Pakistani men is 21 per cent (Castles p.7). As Smith observes, the likely explanation for this concentration is that migrants tend to seek work in industries with which they were familiar in their country of birth. While being concentrated in the textile industry, however, Pakistani men were under-represented in the construction industry since only 2 per cent were employed in this industry compared with 12 per cent of the total male population, and 13.5 per cent of Jamaicans.

The industrial distribution of black male workers in Britain differs from the indigenous population and this situation is not shared by foreign migrant workers whose industrial distribution is fairly similar to that of the total population except that they are over-represented in the service industries (Castles p.75). Thus the employment situation of black men differs from that of white, even white foreign, men and, in addition, there is diversity between culturally distinct black men.

In addition to being over-represented within certain industries black workers are not evenly spread throughout plants within the industries. Thus, for example, despite the concentration of Pakistani workers in the textile industry there are plants, within the industry, which in 1974 did

not employ any Pakistanis (Smith p.97). Indeed Smith found clear evidence of a polarization between plants which do and those which do not employ black workers to the extent that:

At one extreme, a mere 14 per cent of plants (those with concentrations of at least 20 per cent) account for over half (52 per cent) of minority employees. At the other end of the scale, two fifths of plants (39 per cent) employ only 3 per cent of minority workers between them. (p.95)

Thus, the evidence examined so far demonstrates that black men are not spread representatively throughout jobs, industries or plants. Their employment situation differs from that of white men and there are also variations between black men themselves.

Shiftwork

Similarly black men overall are substantially more likely to work shifts than white men but there are also differences between black men of different ethnic origins. Thus Smith found that while 15 per cent of the total male employed population worked shifts the figure for minority men was 31 per cent. Similarly, if consideration is confined to night shift working virtually the same contrast is evident since 19 per cent of minority men compared with 9 per cent of white men worked nights (Smith p. 1).

Within this overall picture, moreover, shiftwork, and especially night shiftwork, is most common amongst Pakistani men. Thus while approximately 30 per cent of Indian, African and West Indian men were employed on shiftwork in 1974 the figure for Pakistanis was 31 per cent. Similarly while 8 per cent of Pakistanis worked permanent nights and 27 per cent worked shifts including nights comparable figures for other men are as follows:

white men - 1 per cent permanent nights and 9 per cent total night shifts; West Indians - 1 and 19 per cent; Indians - 4 and 18 per cent and Africans 3 and 12 per cent (Smith p.81). As Smith notes, the disproportionate level of shift work among black men is not simply a consequence of their concentration in low skilled jobs since if the whites were distributed between job levels in the way that the minorities are actually distributed, then there would still be only 21 per cent of them working shifts, compared with 31 per cent of the minorities (p.81).

Pakistanis are particularly prone to shiftworking in the textile industry and a survey conducted in 1967, within the cotton industry, found that while 15 per cent of the spinning workers and 10 per cent of the weaving workers were immigrants, the immigrants staffed 59 per cent of the spinning night shifts and 36 per cent of the weaving night shifts (The Textile Council, Cotton and Allied Textiles, 1969, p.177 cited in Castles p.78).

Working unsocial hours is generally considered undesirable and in fact it is only because it attracts premium rates of pay that enough people are prepared to work shifts. The fact that black men are over-represented within shiftwork immediately implies, therefore, that they are again concentrated within employment rejected by white men. However, there are two factors which may encourage black men to actually choose to work shifts. Firstly, non-English speaking Asian men may choose to work nights because of the ethnic workgroups which exist on night shifts in some industries, since this provides companionship and releases them from the need to speak English. Also, since shiftwork attracts higher rates of pay than employment within regular hours it is feasible that black men actually choose to work

unsocial hours because of the premium rates of pay. As Chapter 7 describes, the financial obligations of West Indian and Asian men are frequently higher than those of white men since West Indian and Asian wage earners support a higher ratio of dependants than white workers, they frequently have to pay more for inferior accommodation, and often have financial commitments to family members in their country of origin. Thus, the possibility that black men choose to work shifts, because of the premium rates of pay that shiftworking attracts, must be considered.

Earnings

Black men in general earn less than white men. In 1974, when the median gross weekly earning of white men was £40.20, Indian men earned £38.10, West Indians £37.10 and Pakistanis/Bangladeshis and African Asians received the lowest earnings - £35.40 and £34.10 (Smith p.83). The low earnings of Pakistanis corresponds with their concentration in low level jobs but this correlation does not apply to African Asians who are the group with job levels most similar to whites but they receive the lowest earnings. African Asians are the group most well represented in professional, management and white collar jobs but white non-manual workers earned substantially more than non-manual minority men. Thus, taking into account the difference in age distribution of the two groups, white non-manual workers earned £52.4 compared with £40.5 per week for minority non-manual workers. Similarly among skilled workers, the earnings of whites were higher - £39.3 compared with £35.6. At the lowest job levels white and minority men earned the same - £35.3 p.w. (Smith p.85) but in order to achieve this equality of earnings black men have to do more shift work because their jobs

are intrinsically more poorly paid. Thus, rather than choosing shiftwork because of high rates of pay, it is only by working shifts that black men are able to earn a reasonable wage. While there was a large differential between white unskilled manual shift workers and those working regular hours (£40.8 compared with £29.1), among minority men there was negligible difference between the earnings of those who worked shifts and those who did not (£35.7 compared with £35.0 - Smith p.85).

Thus, to summarize, the earnings of black men in general are lower than those of whites but within this generalization there are differences between black men of different ethnic origins. Indeed, in 1974, the discrepancy between the earnings of Pakistani/Bangladeshi/African Asian men and Indian men was greater than the difference between the earnings of whites and Indians/West Indians. This situation existed despite the fact that it is African Asians who perform jobs most similar to white men and that shiftwork is most common amongst Pakistanis.

Unemployment

The foregoing analysis of the employment situation of black men shows that, despite cultural variations, their overall labour market position is inferior to that of white men. Black men are concentrated in low skilled jobs within certain plants and industries, frequently those which have experienced difficulty in attracting labour. They are paid less than white men, particularly when the earnings of white and black men at the higher end of the job scale are compared. Moreover black men frequently perform shiftwork but shiftwork premiums do not raise their earnings above those of white men because the jobs of black men are intrinsically badly paid. In view of this evidence, therefore, it may be assumed that black men

are employed in jobs rejected by white males and this assumption is substantiated by the available data on unemployment which shows that during periods of full employment black men are no more likely to suffer unemployment than the total male population whereas they are disproportionately vulnerable as unemployment increases (Smith p.68-70). Thus, between 1963 and 1966, when total unemployment was declining there was a significant decrease in minority unemployment both in absolute terms and as a percentage of the total. Between 1966 and 1968, however, when there was a dramatic increase in total unemployment, minority unemployment rose sharply as did their proportion of the total unemployed. As total unemployment stabilized between 1968 and 1970 minority unemployment as a percentage of the total again fell and by 1970 minority unemployment was at approximately the same level as that of the general population. By 1970 minority unemployment formed between 2 and 3 per cent of total unemployment while the minority workforce was about 24 per cent of the total - Smith p.68). However, during the recent rise in total unemployment (November 1973 - February 1980) the evidence that black men suffer disproportionately in times of high unemployment is substantiated since, during this period, total unemployment doubled while the number of black people on the register quadrupled (The Runnymede Trust p.64).

Unemployment, moreover, is not spread evenly throughout the black workforce and during the period February 1979 to February 1980 unemployment among West Indians increased by 13.5 per cent while the equivalent figure for Pakistanis was 10.1 per cent (The Runnymede Trust p.66). African Asian men are most severely hit, experiencing almost twice the unemployment of

other minority men (44 per cent compared with 23 per cent in 1974 - Smith p.68). One possible explanation for the high unemployment rate of African Asian men is that they are relatively recent migrants to Britain. This interpretation rests on the assumption that migrants experience their greatest employment problems soon after arrival in Britain and the evidence of the P.E.P. survey confirms this. This survey analysed the proportion of minority men who had experienced unemployment during a period of ten years and found that more recent arrivals are much more likely than well-established ones to have suffered unemployment during this period (Smith p.68). Date of arrival in Britain, however, is not the total explanation and other factors include age structure, area of residence, type of work etc. For example, young people of all ethnic origins are more likely to be unemployed than older people. Thus a person's likely exposure to unemployment is influenced by various factors but whether he is black or white is probably the most crucial.

Women Waged Workers

Having established that the employment situation of black men differs both from that of white men and also between each other this thesis goes on to consider whether such differentiation occurs between women. Firstly, however, it is necessary to consider the overall position of women workers in Britain comparing their situation with that of men in order to assess the significance of gender in determining a person's labour market position. This is the subject of the following Chapter. After considering the differing cultural backgrounds of white, West Indian and Asian women, a comparative analysis of their paid employment in Britain is presented in Chapter 7. This Chapter concludes that, despite shared characteristics,

West Indian, Asian and white female waged workers in Britain differ both in the proportion who are economically active and in the type of work performed. It is argued that similarities in the situation of women of different ethnic groups results largely from their shared position as both domestic and waged workers while variations in their role within the family are significant in explaining differences in the employment situation of West Indian, white and Asian women. Thus this thesis considers, in some detail, cultural differences in gender role definition in addition to the effects of sexual and racial oppression.

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CHAPTER 2

PAID EMPLOYMENT AMONG WOMEN, AND SPECIFICALLY MOTHERS IN BRITAIN DURING THE 1970s.

This Chapter, in providing an overall picture of women's employment during the 1970s, demonstrates that women, and increasingly mothers of young children, now constitute a substantial part of the total labour force. There has been a notable rise in the economic activity rates of married women and, for the majority of women, marriage and motherhood is no longer an exclusive career but rather one which is combined with the role of waged worker. However, despite the increased participation of women in paid employment, they remain concentrated in a limited range of industries and occupations and are largely confined to low paid and low skilled jobs with only a very small minority of women reaching highly paid positions.

Employment Rates for Women

According to the Department of Employment's Census of Employment women made up 40.9 per cent of employees in employment in June 1977 (see Table 2:1). Between the period 1971 and 1977 there was a decrease of 348,000 in the number of male employees while, in the same period, the number of women employees increased by 825,000.

A striking difference in the employment patterns of men and women is the relative percentages working part-time. In 1977 39.9 per cent of women employees worked part-time while the corresponding figure for men was 5.2 per cent. Between 1971 and 1975 the growth in part-time employment among

TABLE 2.1: EMPLOYEES IN EMPLOYMENT, 1971-1977
(thousands)

	<u>Men</u>			<u>Women</u>			Women as % of Total Employees	
	Full - Time	Part - Time	Total	% Part - Time	Full - Time	Part - Time		Total
1971	12,840	584	13,424	4.4	5,468	2,757	8,225	37.9
1972	12,719	600	13,319	4.5	5,454	2,877	8,331	38.4
1973	12,813	665	13,478	4.9	5,542	3,163	8,705	39.2
1974	12,675	689	13,364	5.2	5,512	3,421	8,933	40.0
1975	12,542	697	13,239	5.3	5,422	3,551	8,973	40.3
1976	12,398	699	13,097	5.3	5,366	3,585	8,951	40.5
1977	12,395	681	13,076	5.2	5,433	3,617	9,050	40.9

Source: Department of Employment Gazette, reproduced in E.O.C. 1978-79, p.44
and Employment Gazette, February 1980, p.147.

women was dramatic but although the upward trend continued it is less marked in recent years, and between 1974 and 1977 the percentage of women employees working part-time declined for the first time.

When considering statistics on 'employees in employment' it should be recognised that this term does not include employers, the self-employed, H.M. Forces and the unemployed. This omission is particularly important in the case of homework which is a form of work performed in the main by mothers of young children (see following Chapter). Even where homeworkers are registered as self-employed they will not be included in statistics on 'employees in employment' which reduces the possibility of obtaining an accurate picture of recent employment trends among women with children. Also, women who are not employed but who are seeking work will not be included.

Department of Employment statistics no longer distinguish between married and non-married women. Figures prior to 1977 show that a striking trend in women's employment over recent years has been the increase in the economic activity rates of married women. As Table 2:2 illustrates about two-thirds of women employees are married and the number of married women in the labour force increased by almost a million (932,000) between 1971 and 1974. By 1974 49 per cent of married women were economically active and this represents a 6.7 per cent increase since 1971 (E.O.C., 1979, p.38). The percentage of married women in the labour force increases when age groups over thirty are considered (see Table 2:3). Indeed, using the 1971 Census material Hakim concludes that by 1971 the typical working woman was married and of a mature age and that "working women were representative

TABLE 2:2: LABOUR FORCE ESTIMATES (excluding students) at June each year

Year	Men		Married Women		Non-Married Women		All Women		Married women employees as % of all women employees	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
1971	15,933	63.7	5,799	23.2	3,286	13.1	9,085	36.3		63.8
1972	15,837	63.5	5,895	23.6	3,225	12.9	9,120	36.5		64.6
1973	15,940	62.5	6,352	24.9	3,194	12.5	9,546	37.4		66.5
1974	15,757	61.9	6,580	25.8	3,130	12.3	9,710	38.1		67.7
1975	15,830	61.0	6,603	25.8	3,189	12.4	9,792	38.2		67.4
1976	15,914	61.5	6,731	26.0	3,225	12.5	9,954	38.5		67.6

Source: Department of Employment Gazette reproduced in E.O.C. 1978-79, p.38.

Age Group	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050	2055	2060	2065	2070	2075	2080	2085	2090	2095	2100
16-19	64.7	88.5	97.6	98.3	97.6	95.0	86.6	76.5	8.4	5.4	4.8	58.2	64.3	52.7	67.9	68.2	53.9	28.4	4.8										

TABLE 2.3: ECONOMIC ACTIVITY RATES (excluding students), June 1976

TABLE 2.3: ECONOMIC ACTIVITY RATES (excluding students), June 1976

Age Group	All Men	Married Women	Non-Married Women	All Women
16-19	64.7	51.9	58.8	58.2
20-24	88.5	54.6	76.7	64.3
25-34	97.6	47.8	79.1	52.7
35-44	98.3	66.4	78.7	67.9
45-54	97.6	56.3	77.5	68.2
55-59	95.0	49.8	66.5	53.9
60-64	86.6	26.6	32.0	28.4
65-69	76.5			
70+	8.4	5.4	4.5	4.8

Source: Department of Employment Gazette reproduced in E.O.C. 1978-79, p.39.

of all women in the age group as regards marital status. Single women were only slightly over-represented, and married women slightly under-represented ... By 1971 the female work-force had become broadly representative of the female population of working age." (p.11/12)

Thus marriage no longer excludes women from waged work and a national survey conducted by Hunt (1968) demonstrated that by the mid-1960s the great majority of women worked for most of their lives:

Of those women working in the mid-1960s about half had always worked. Of those whose work history was discontinuous, a majority had interrupted their work only temporarily to return to the labour force later. The proportion of women who had no continuing commitment to work was relatively small: about one-quarter of those surveyed. (Hakim, p.1)

Type of Employment

Despite the increased participation of women in the labour force, however, the distribution of women workers throughout the economy remained noticeably uneven during the 1970s. Women were concentrated in a limited range of industries and occupations.

As Table 2:4 shows, nearly three-quarters (74 per cent) of women employees worked in the service industries in 1977; 84 per cent of part-time and 67 per cent of full-time women in employment. Moreover more than half (58 per cent) of women workers were employed in three particular groups - professional and scientific services, the distributive trades and miscellaneous services. In the service industries women workers constituted over half of all employees and were therefore over-represented in relation to women's one-third contribution to the national labour force as a whole. Moreover between June 1976 and 1977 an additional 73,500 women (36,600

TABLE 2-4: EMPLOYEES BY INDUSTRIAL SECTOR AT JUNE 1977

Industrial Sector	Men	Women		All	Women as % of all employees in industrial sector	Women in industrial sector as % of all women employees	thousands
		Full- Time	Part- Time				
All industries & services	13,076	5,433	3,617	9,050	40.9	100	
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	286	59	33	92	24.3	1.0	
Index of Production Industries	6,783	1,738	546	2,284	25.1	25.2	
Manufacturing Industries	5,049	1,612	489	2,101	29.3	23.2	
Service Industries	6,006	3,636	3,037	6,673	52.6	73.7	
Mining & quarrying	333	12	3	15	4.3	0.1	
Food, drink & tobacco	411	181	97	278	40.3	3.0	
Coal & petroleum products	32	3	1	4	11.1	0.04	
Chemicals & allied industries	311	97	26	123	28.3	1.3	
Metal manufacture	428	43	12	55	11.4	0.6	
Mechanical engineering	772	113	30	143	15.6	1.5	
Instrument engineering	95	41	12	53	35.6	0.5	
Electrical engineering	468	219	57	277	37.2	3.0	
Shipbuilding & marine engineering	160	9	3	12	6.9	0.1	
Vehicles	650	78	12	89	12.1	0.9	
Metal goods not elsewhere specified	383	110	38	149	27.9	1.6	

continued

TABLE 2:4 continued

Industrial Sector	Men	Women		All	Women as % of all employees in industrial sector	Women in industrial sector as % of all women employees ³
		Full- Time	Part- Time			
Textiles	261	171	48	219	45.6	2.4
Leather & fur	22	13	5	18	44.5	0.1
Clothing & footwear	87	231	52	283	76.7	3.1
Bricks, pottery, glass, cement etc.	197	49	12	61	23.6	0.6
Timber, furniture etc.	204	37	12	49	19.3	0.5
Paper, printing & publishing	361	131	39	170	32.0	1.8
Other manufacturing industries	207	84	33	117	36.1	1.2
Construction	1,128	64	39	103	8.3	1.1
Gas, electricity & water	273	50	14	65	19.1	0.7
Transport & communication	1,189	203	55	258	17.8	2.8
Distributive trades	1,201	743	756	1,499	55.5	16.5
Insurance, banking etc.	544	406	177	583	51.7	6.4
Professional & scientific services	1,125	1,275	1,146	2,421	68.2	26.7
Miscellaneous services	975	563	755	1,318	57.4	14.5
Public administration & defence	971	445	178	593	37.9	6.5

Source: Department of Employment Gazette, February 1960, pp.148-152.

part-time and 37,000 full-time) were employed in the service industries compared with an increase of only 4,200 male employees (Employment Gazette, Feb. 1980, p.153). The major increases in terms of women's employment in the service sector between 1976 and 1977 were in insurance and banking (30,000: 17,000 part-time), miscellaneous services (23,900: 19,000 part-time) and distributive trades (12,700: 10,100 part-time). However, the recent increase in part-time women employees in insurance and banking merely recovers some of the losses which were experienced between 1974 and 1976 when 19,000 part-time female jobs were lost in this sector (Fonda and Moss p.128).

The corollary of the high concentration of women workers in the service sector is their limited participation in manufacturing industries and again they remained concentrated in particular areas. Thus in June 1977 half of all women employed in the manufacturing industries worked in four industrial groups - food, drink and tobacco; electrical engineering, textiles and clothing and footwear. Moreover between June 1976 and 1977 the number of women working in these sectors increased by 22,900 whereas male participation declined by 2,600 (Department of Employment Gazette, Feb. 1980, p.148).

In terms of occupational distribution the Department of Employment's New Earnings Survey shows that in 1977 women workers predominated in catering, cleaning, hairdressing and other personal services (76 per cent women) and professional and related (education, welfare and health) (63 per cent) (E.O.C. 1978-79 p.43). Indeed, in her analysis of Census data, Hakim shows that in 1971 2 per cent of occupations had no women workers, 12 per cent had

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70 per cent or more women employees, 26 per cent had a higher proportion of women workers than in the labour force and 74 per cent of occupations had a higher percentage of men workers than in the labour force (p.23). As Hakim notes:

(in 1971) Altogether almost two million worked in occupations where over 90 per cent of all employees were women: typists, secretaries, maids, nurses, canteen assistants, sewing machinists ... (Moreover) within each occupational group, women tend to be over-represented in the less skilled, lower-status or lower-paid jobs, while men are over-represented in the highly skilled and managerial jobs. For example 72 per cent of packers, labellers and related workers are women while 84 per cent of warehousemen and storekeepers are men; 85 per cent of winders and reelers are women while 93.5 per cent of textile dyers are men; 53 per cent of paper product makers are women while 97.3 per cent of compositors are men. (p.31)

In 1971 one-third of women workers were employed in semi- and unskilled work and an additional 50 per cent in intermediate and junior non-manual categories (Hutchins p.1). Thus although the number of women in the category of managers, employers and professional workers rose by over a thousand (from 359,000 to 487,000) between 19 1 and 1971, women's participation in top jobs remained minimal, with over five times as many men in these higher occupational groups (Tizard et. al. p.26). As figures published by the Equal Opportunities Commission (p.40/7) demonstrate, few women were managers and those occupations where women were most likely to hold managerial positions are traditionally female occupations. The profession with the highest proportion of women members was dentistry where women represented 15 per cent of the professionals (E.O.C. 1978-79, p.47).

Earnings

In view of the evidence which shows that women workers were concentrated in low status, low skilled jobs within a limited range of occupations and industries it is of little surprise to find that women earned substantially less than men during the 1970s.

TABLE 2.5: AVERAGE GROSS HOURLY EARNINGS (excluding the effects of overtime hours)

	pence per hour						
	1970	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
Men (21 and over)	5.0	93.7	107.2	139.3	156.1	181.5	204.9
Women (18 and over)	42.5	80.3	70.6	98.3	122.4	133.9	148.0
Differential	22.5	33.4	36.6	41.0	44.2	47.6	56.9
Women's earnings as % of men's	65.4	64.4	59.9	70.6	73.5	73.8	72.2

Source: Department of Employment New Earnings Survey reproduced in E.O.C., 1978-79, p.51.

As Table 2.5 illustrates, women's gross hourly earnings, as a percentage of men's, did increase between 1970 and 1977 but declined in 1978 at which point women earned 72 per cent of men's hourly pay. Moreover it is likely that the statistics indicate that women's earnings are closer to men's than they are in reality because the New Earnings Survey does not include those workers whose earnings are below the tax threshold. Also, the effect of overtime is to widen the gap between male and female earnings since men work substantially more overtime than women.

In summary, therefore, despite their substantial participation in waged work, women workers in Britain remained concentrated in less skilled and lower paid jobs than men. They were over-represented in the service sector of industry and in a limited range of industries within manufacturing. Economically active mothers of young children share the characteristics of women waged workers in general but, in addition, their child rearing responsibilities are likely to restrict mothers' employment opportunities still further and I turn now to consider the specific position of mothers of pre-school children within the labour force.

Employment Rates for Mothers of Pre-School Children

Unfortunately recent statistics on women workers provided by the Department of Employment do not distinguish between mothers and childless women. However, according to the Census, over one-fifth (20.2 per cent) of mothers with a child under five years of age were economically active in 1971. Nearly 590,000 mothers of pre-school children were actually engaged in paid employment while a further 48,500 were waiting to start a new job, seeking employment or prevented from working by illness. This means that for every thousand mothers with children under five 187 were employed and a further 15 were economically active but not actually working. Thus seven per cent of all economically active women were mothers of pre-school children, and between 1961 and 1971 the rate of increase in employment rates for this group of mothers was faster than for all married women under 60 (53 per cent compared to 42 per cent) (Tizard et. al. and Fonda and Moss).

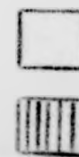
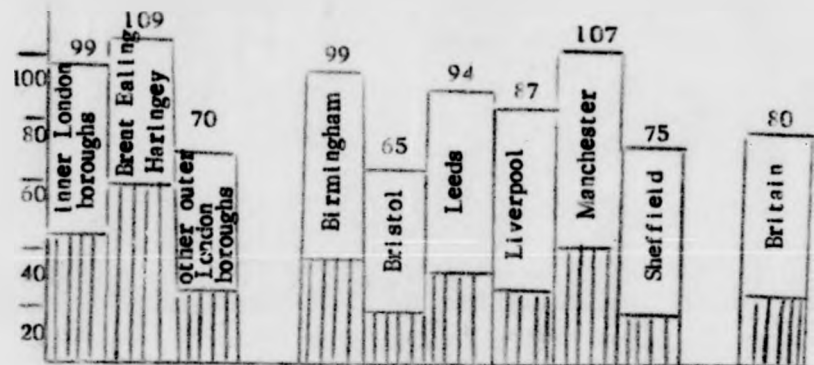
Moreover, the evidence available since 1971 indicates a further increase in the employment rate for mothers of pre-school children and suggests that there may have been some under-reporting in the Census. The 1978 OPCS showed that in 1974 50 per cent of mothers with children under five were employed and the Family Expenditure Survey data for the same year shows that 34 per cent of such mothers were engaged in waged work (Fonda and Moss p.8). It is possible that the lower employment rates recorded in the 1971 Census reflect under-reporting particularly in the case of self-employed mothers and part-time women workers.

National statistics obviously hide regional and local variations which are great both in terms of overall employment rates for mothers and the proportion working full-time. For example, the employment rate for mothers of pre-school children in the Inner London boroughs is 40 per cent above that in Outer London, and Manchester has an overall employment rate over 40 per cent above Sheffield's, and double Sheffield's for full-time employment (Tizard et. al. and Fonda and Moss).

As Table 2:6 illustrates, mothers living in certain areas have higher employment rates than the national average. The current industrial composition and unemployment rates of different areas are likely to be important and Kleic found that full-time employment rates for married women were higher in towns than in rural areas. Similarly the 1968 Government Social Survey study noted "highest employment rates in conurbations, followed by 'other urban' and finally 'rural areas'" (Tizard, p.129). Gales and Marks (1974) argue however that traditional rates of women's employment are possibly more significant than current industrial composition:

TABLE 2.6: EMPLOYMENT RATES FOR WOMEN WITH PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN IN VARIOUS LOCAL AUTHORITY AREAS AND IN BRITAIN (1971)

Number of employed married women with child(ren) under five per 1000 married women aged 15-44



Proportion employed 30 hours or more per week

Proportion employed less than 30 hours per week

Source: Unpublished data from 1971 Census (10% sample) reproduced in Fonda and Moss, p.15.

It is of interest that the factor found to be most highly correlated with the activity rate of married women was a measure of the extent of women's work in each area in the past. The finding that the current activity rate of married women was more highly correlated with the tradition measure than with any of the measures of current industrial composition, suggests that although the 'tradition' may have originated in the nature of the available jobs in an area, current practice in regard to women's work after marriage is less dependent upon current industrial composition than upon past employment practice. (quoted in Fonda and Moss, p.17)

Another possible example of the influence of historical and cultural factors on mothers' employment rates is the high rate of employment among mothers born outside the British Isles, and particularly among West Indian women (see Chapter 7). However although cultural factors are significant the economic deprivation experienced by minority families in Britain must also be considered as a possible factor influencing female employment rates.

Marital status of mothers and the number and ages of their pre-school children also influence employment rates and the proportion of mothers working full-time. Non-married (separated, divorced, widowed and unmarried) mothers have higher employment rates than mothers living with their husbands. Thus, in 1971, the employment rate of mothers of pre-school children living with their husbands was 68 per cent of that of non-married mothers. In addition, husbandless mothers were three-times more likely to be working full-time (Fonda and Moss p.17).

Employment rates among mothers decline as the number of children in the family increases. Thus among married mothers aged under 25 years 17 per cent of those with one child were employed in 1971 while only 9 per cent of mothers with four or more children worked. However, when older mothers are considered the actual number of children in the family has less

significance on maternal employment rates (Fonda and Moss p.20).

The age of a mother's child/ren) also influences employment rates which rise as the age of the child increases (see Table 2:7).

Hours of Employment

Despite high rates of full-time employment among certain groups of mothers with pre-school children (e.g. non-married mothers and women born outside the British Isles) the overall majority work part-time. As Table 2:8 shows nearly two-thirds (65%) of employed mothers with a child under five years of age worked part-time in 1971 compared with 39 per cent of women without dependent children (E.C.C. 1978/9, p.45).

TABLE 2:8: PROPORTION OF WORKING MOTHERS WITH YOUNGEST CHILD UNDER FIVE WORKING 18, 18 - 30, AND OVER 30 HOURS PER WEEK IN 1971.

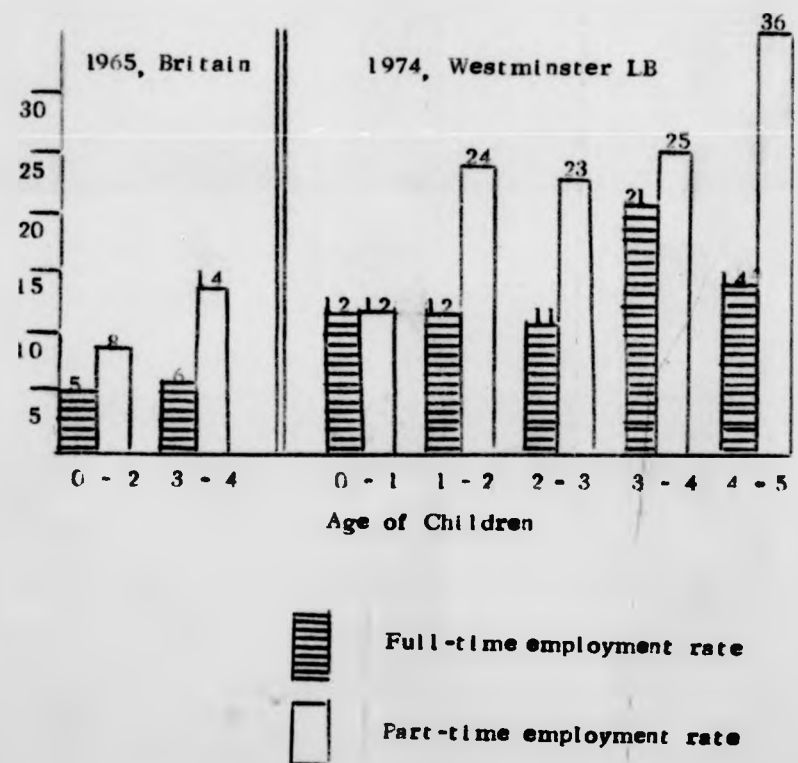
<u>Hours Employed per Week</u>	<u>Married</u>	<u>Non-Married</u>	<u>Both</u>
Under 18 hours	36%	21%	35%
18 - 30 hours	31%	18%	30%
Over 30 hours	28%	56%	30%

Source: 1971 Census reproduced in Fonda and Moss p.9.

Little is known about when these hours are worked but since a major benefit of part-time workers, from the point of view of employers, is that they are considered a flexible supply of labour often utilised to cope with a boost in production in the manufacturing industries and to cover busy periods within the service industries it is likely that they are employed when needed rather than when the women wish to work (see Chapter 3). This factor, together with the restraints of mothers' domestic commitments, is likely to severely limit the mother's choice about when she works.

TABLE 2.7: FULL AND PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT RATES FOR WOMEN WITH CHILDREN AGED 0 - 4 BY AGE OF CHILD
(1965 Britain; 1974 Westminster LB)

Part-time and Full-time employment rates (%)
for women with children in each age group



Source: Hunt (1988): unpublished analysis of 1974 Westminster Social Services Dept data reproduced in Fonda and Moss p. 21.

In the 1965 survey of women's employment, 16% of employed mothers responsible for children worked within school hours. A further 6.5% worked evenings, early mornings or overnight, and 14.5% worked 'standard' working hours (i.e. between 8-10 a.m. and 4.30-5.30 p.m., 5 days a week). By comparison, among employed women without children, only 1.5% worked evenings, early mornings or overnight and 41% followed a 'standard' work pattern. But the most common work pattern for both groups of women was 'other' and 'no set pattern or not stated'. These accounted for 49% of women without children and 59% of those with. (Fonda and Moss p.11).

Similarly the 1979 Woman's Own survey revealed that more than one-third of their sample of mothers of pre-school children worked evenings or nights.

Type of Employment

When considering the type of work performed by employed mothers of pre-school children the fact that the majority work part-time is significant since, as shown in Chapter 3, part-time work is frequently low-paid, irregular and without prospects or fringe benefits. Moreover, part-time women employees are even more concentrated in a limited range of industries than full-time women workers. In June 1977 84 per cent of part-time women workers were employed in the service industries - 78 per cent in four industrial groups (distributive trades; professional and scientific services; miscellaneous services; and public administration). Indeed the small minority of part-time women employees working in manufacturing industries has declined in recent years. In 1971 only 17.1 per cent were employed in this sector and this had fallen to 14.7 per cent in 1975 and 13.5 per cent in 1977.

The very limited evidence which is available on the type of work done by mothers of pre-school children suggests that they are in lower skilled and lower paid jobs than women workers in general. Thus the 1974 FES data revealed that 54 per cent of working mothers with a child under five years old

and 47 per cent with a child aged 5 - 10 were in semi and unskilled manual occupations, compared with 21 per cent of childless women of child-bearing age (Fonda and Moss p.12). Similarly the 1979 Woman's Own survey, which was based on interviews with over 500 mothers, found that almost two-thirds of working mothers were employed in semi and unskilled manual work compared with one-third of employed women generally. Moreover, this survey showed that the hourly rate of pay of the mothers interviewed was substantially less than that of women workers in general: 90 pence per hour compared with £1.28.

A sphere of employment which is characterised by exceptionally low rates of pay is homework and this is the only employment option possible for many mothers of young children. Statistics on the number of women working at home are likely to be unreliable, because of under-reporting, and the 1974 F.E.S. estimated that anywhere between 10 and 44 per cent of employed mothers were self-employed. As discussed in Chapter 3, homeworkers frequently are badly paid, do not receive fringe benefits and are treated as a flexible supply of labour.

The Situation of Women's Employment in the 1970s and 1980s

Women workers constituted nearly 41 per cent of total employees in 1971 and yet they remain concentrated in low skilled and low paid work within a limited range of occupations and industries. This concentration has remained despite recent Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay legislation (discussed in Chapter 3) which, the evidence indicates, has been of very limited effect. Thus a project which monitored the influence of these Acts in twenty-six organisations between 1974 and 1977 revealed that the

occupational distribution of women remained almost completely unaltered. In four organisations a small number of women moved into traditionally male jobs and in two firms a larger number of men moved into women's jobs (Glucklich et. al. p778). Obviously the effectiveness of Equal Pay legislation is severely curtailed while sexual divisions remain within organisations.

Because of the industrial and occupational concentration of women workers their employment options are dependent on the fortunes of a more limited range of occupational groups than the options of men, who are more evenly distributed throughout the labour market, and the evidence for 1981/82 shows that women's employment prospects have deteriorated since the 1970s.

Women have suffered a more rapid increase in unemployment than men, and by 1982 female unemployment was over one million. Between 1976 and 1982 registered male unemployment doubled to 2,124,000 while registered unemployment amongst women trebled to 834,000¹ (Dept. of Employment Gazette, Feb. 1979, 1981 and 1982). Partly as a result of the discouraging effect of this high and increasing rate of unemployment the economic activity rate of married women has declined from 50.4 per cent in 1977 to an estimated 48.5 per cent in 1982, although projections from the Dept. of Employment indicate that their economic activity rate will increase after 1982 (E.O.C., 1981, p.62). Whilst the number of married women

1. Since a large number of unemployed women do not register as unemployed the figure of 834,000 is an understatement of true female unemployment and in 1980 unregistered unemployment amongst women was estimated at 250,000 - E.O.C., 1981, p.72).

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full-time paid workers has declined, however, from 2,702,000 in 1971 to 2,691,000 in 1981 the number of married female part-time workers has increased from 2,415,000 to 3,298,000 over the same period (Dept. of Employment Gazette, Nov. 1982). This is significant in that part-time workers generally receive lower pay, are subjected to inferior employment conditions and are more concentrated in a limited range of industries than full-timers. Indeed amongst women manual waged workers generally their concentration in catering, cleaning, hairdressing and other personal services has increased from 46.7 per cent in 1975 to 57.5 per cent in 1981. In non-manual employment 56.9 per cent of all women waged workers were in clerical and related occupations in 1981 compared with 58.2 per cent in 1975 (New Earnings Survey 1975 and 1981). Also, the New Earnings Survey shows that women's hourly earnings have declined from 75.5 per cent of those of men in 1977 to 74.8 per cent in 1981. Women's hourly earnings, relative to men's, are moreover closer than women's average gross weekly earnings as a percentage of men's and the discrepancy is significantly smaller in the public compared with the private sector. Thus in 1981 women's weekly earnings in the public sector were 71.4 per cent of those of men while the comparative figure for the private sector was 59.1 per cent (New Earnings Survey 1981).

The first two years of this decade, therefore, have witnessed a deterioration in the already limited employment prospects of women in the 1970s. Women have suffered a more rapid increase in unemployment, than men: there has been a rise in part-time employment which is notoriously badly paid: the concentration of women manual workers in largely female

industries has increased and women's wages, as a percentage of men's, have declined. Women's paid employment, moreover, has ramifications for their role in the family. For example, where working wives lose their jobs the effect on family income is frequently drastic, men withdraw help with the housework, and child care facilities are often lost.

Discussion in this thesis is mainly confined to the situation which existed during the 1970s since this incorporates the period of my empirical research. The fluidity of the situation should however be borne in mind throughout.

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CHAPTER 3

RECENT STATE POLICIES AND EMPLOYERS' ATTITUDES:

THE POSITION FACING EMPLOYED MOTHERS IN THE MID-1970s.

As outlined in the previous Chapter, the decade 1961-1971 witnessed a significant growth in employment amongst mothers of pre-school children and by the mid-1970s between one-quarter and one-third of mothers with children under five were employed. This Chapter considers state policies and employers' attitudes towards employed women in general and, more specifically, towards working mothers.

Although the impact of state policy is wide ranging and affects routine administrative practices and policies in areas such as education, taxation, social security etc., I confine the major part of this discussion to a consideration of important recent legislation and to the provision of state child care facilities. The impact of the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts and the maternity leave and pay provisions of the Employment Protection Act are briefly reviewed in order to demonstrate their limited practical value and to show that the underlying causes of women's subordination as waged workers are not challenged by these legislative reforms. Similarly, although child care is a major restriction on the employment options of mothers of pre-school children official policy in this area is contradictory and the number of day care places has remained grossly inadequate despite the increase in employment amongst mothers of children under five. The assumption that a mother's primary role is in the home, assuming responsibility for the care of her children

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and as the financial dependent of her husband, is reflected in both state policies and employers' attitudes towards employed women.

Major State Legislation

Both the Equal Pay Act and the Sex Discrimination Act came into force in December 1975, while the maternity leave provisions of the Employment Protection Act came into operation on 1 June the following year. The Equal Pay Act provides that a woman should get equal pay where a man is doing 'like' work (that is work of the same or broadly similar nature) or where a man is doing work 'rated as equivalent'. Direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of sex or marital status in recruitment, training and promotion was made unlawful by the Sex Discrimination Act.

This means that, as from 1975, it was illegal for employers to systematically exclude mothers of pre-school children from employment, training or promotion and this principle was recently restated in the case of Hurley v. Mustoe (1981) where the President of the Appeal Tribunal declared:

Parliament has legislated that it is up to each mother to decide whether or not she goes out to work and employers may not discriminate against them just because they are mothers and Parliament has legislated that women with children are not to be treated as a class but as individuals. (E.O.C., 1982, p.1)

Also in 1981, the Court of Appeal ruled that Mrs. Coleman had suffered direct discrimination when she was dismissed from her employment with a travel agency because her husband worked for a rival firm and it was assumed that he was the breadwinner. Lord Justice Lawton stated:

I am satisfied that the dismissal of a woman based upon the assumption that men are more likely than women to be the primary supporters of their spouses and children can amount to discrimination under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975. (E.O.C., 1982, p.1).

In September 1982 the Employment Appeal Tribunal ruled that a Birmingham factory's agreement for part-timers to be selected for redundancy before full-time workers amounted to unlawful sex discrimination and unfair treatment of women since the vast majority of part-time workers are women (Birmingham Evening Mail). However, the Tribunal has dismissed the claim that discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy is unlawful sex discrimination because, it has been ruled, there is no male equivalent of a pregnant woman (IRRR, 217, p.10). Although this decision was made in the context of a claim for unfair dismissal it has possible ramifications for the treatment of pregnant women in other situations. For example, following this case, it is arguable that excluding pregnancy-related illness from a company's sick pay scheme is not sex discrimination and similarly it appears legal for an employer to withdraw a cheap loan or mortgage from a pregnant woman on maternity leave. Overall, applications to Industrial Tribunals have been notably unsuccessful and in 1979 less than 5 per cent of the 263 applications were upheld. Of the remainder, almost a quarter were dismissed, over half were withdrawn and 11 per cent were settled outside the Tribunal (Labour Research, p.195).

The obvious limitation of the Equal Pay Act is that a man must be doing the same or broadly similar work and for many women workers there are no male equivalents because women remain concentrated in a limited range of occupations and industries (see Chapter 2). Also, as noted by the Financial Times, "under the law it is much harder to compare the similarity of part-time jobs than full-time ones simply because there are so few men in part-time employment. By increasing part-time opportunities for women,

employers could thereby avoid some of the economic consequences of the law ... and) the increased demand for part-time women workers may have been partly caused by the Equal Pay Act". This is only one of a range of actions taken by employers to reduce their obligations under the Equal Pay Act. Fourteen of the 25 organizations monitored by the I.S.E. Project (Smell, Clucklick and Povall) were found to have taken such actions during the implementation period of the Act. Avoidance tactics included increased job segregation to prevent equal pay comparisons and the introduction or restructuring of grading systems with the result that women ended up on lower grades or rates irrespective of their skill level. As the Project notes "many of these actions, had they been taken after 29 December 1975 would have been unlawful, but taken before the Act came into force they enabled employers to comply with the law while reducing the amount of pay the women would have been entitled to and would have received had these actions not been taken" (p. 20).

Two years after the implementation of the Act women still earn significantly less than men - in 1975 women's hourly pay was 72 per cent of men's, and in 1977 it was 75 per cent (E.O.C., 1982). Since 1977 women's earnings as a percentage of men's have declined (see Chapter 2) and, in 1982, the Equal Opportunities Commission concluded that "women's relative earnings have reached a plateau and are unlikely to show any significant improvement so long as the law remains unaltered". Indeed so abysmal is the impact of the Equal Pay Act that the European Commission has commenced infringement proceedings against the British Government for its failure to implement Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome. This

Article establishes the principle that women and men should receive equal pay for equal work and not merely like work. Also, in the case of *Macarthys Ltd. v. Smith*, the European Court stated that the principle of equal pay was not confined to situations where men and women were contemporaneously doing equal work and, during 1980, the Equal Opportunities Commission is supporting cases where women are claiming equal pay with their predecessors. In short, the E.E.C. Commissioners consider that the present work evaluation procedures employed in Britain are inadequate and discriminatory.

The major difficulty of the Sex Discrimination Act is actually proving discrimination since it is the claimant who must demonstrate that, on the balance of probabilities, discrimination has occurred. The E.O.C. has powers of investigation and the discretion to assist a prospective complainant where the case raises a question of principle although there is little evidence that it has employed these powers to significantly improve employment opportunities for women. Few women have pursued claims and the number has decreased steadily from 401 in 1976 to 264 in 1979 (Gregory, p.76). These claims are accorded low status and the E.O.C. "feels that the awards of compensation for injured feelings are at a level so minimal that they appear almost a rebuff to their victim" (*Labour Research*, p.196). Moreover, a significant proportion (over one-third) of cases are withdrawn and, in her study of the reasons for withdrawal, Gregory found that women were frequently subjected to a variety of pressures from, for example, conciliation officers and solicitors which caused them to settle for less than they had anticipated or to withdraw without gaining anything. Little or no support was available for the women pursuing claims. The low profile maintained by

the E.O.C. meant that many applicants were not aware that the Commission could assist them and A.C.A.S. is concerned with remaining impartial and preventing cases from reaching Tribunal rather than fulfilling a supportive role. Where a claim is pursued the success rate at the Tribunal is low - in 1977 only 25 per cent of the 363 cases heard were successful (Dept. of Employment Gazette, April 1978).

The Employment Protection Act conferred on a woman the right to return to her work, as specified under her original contract of employment, up to 29 weeks after the birth of her child providing she fulfilled three main conditions. Firstly, the woman must have been continuously employed by her employer for two years¹ or more at the 11th week prior to the expected date of confinement. Secondly, the woman must have been employed (whether or not she was at work) until immediately before the beginning of the 11th week before the expected birth. Finally, the woman had to give her employer at least three weeks' notice of her intention to stop work due to pregnancy and to return to work after the birth. Provided the woman met these conditions, and gave her employer one week's notice of her intended date of return, she was entitled to remain off work until the end of the 29th week after the birth of her child and to receive 6 weeks' maternity pay from her employer. Maternity Pay is 90 per cent of a woman's gross weekly pay, minus the flat-rate National Insurance maternity allowance. The employer can

1. The two years' qualifying period applied to women who are employed 16 or more hours per week. Women who work between 8 and 16 hours per week must have had five years' continuous service, and those employed 8 or less hours a week have no legal right to maternity leave.

reclaim the maternity pay from the State Maternity Fund.

With the introduction of the 1980 Employment Bill, however, maternity rights have been weakened. Since the introduction of this Bill employers with five or fewer workers are exempted from the obligation to reinstate women if it is not "reasonably practicable" for them to do so. Also, rather than having to reinstate women on terms and conditions "not less favourable" than their original contract stated, employers are now permitted to offer women "suitable" alternative jobs, providing the terms and conditions are not "substantially" less favourable. Moreover, if the woman refuses the offer of "suitable" employment, and this refusal is held to be "unreasonable", she loses her right to a job altogether. The woman's obligation to notify her employer of her intentions has also been increased. She now has to provide written notification of her intention to return to work before taking maternity leave and the final written notification of return must be provided 21 days before resuming work. Finally, employers can request an additional written intention to return to work any time after seven weeks after the birth and a woman loses her reinstatement rights if she fails to provide this written confirmation within 14 days of receiving the employer's request.

United Kingdom statutory maternity rights are among the least generous in the E.E.C. The U.K. is the only E.E.C. member state to make entitlement to maternity benefit conditional upon a period of service with one employer, and the cash benefits paid to women on maternity leave in the U.K. are the second lowest in the E.E.C. (Bargaining Report). Moreover, a significant minority of eligible women are not receiving their rights. A

study by the Policy Studies Institute found that only 42 per cent of apparently eligible women, who worked in organizations with less than 100 employees, received maternity pay (C.I.S. Report, p.6) and overall few women in Britain take maternity pay and leave¹.

A variety of factors influence a woman's decision whether or not to take maternity leave and to return to work. In an article 'Predicting Who Will Take Maternity Leave and Who Will Return to Work' Nickle Bonds argues that women are influenced by "their personalities and up-bringing, by their educational and work experience, and by the kinds of support for taking maternity leave and for continuing to work which is available to them" (I.R.R.R., 129, p.2). Some women who would choose to take maternity leave are, however, not entitled to because they have not served the necessary qualifying period with one employer². In particular the Employment Protection Act discriminates against part-time workers and since 46 per cent of all employed women, and eight out of ten married working women, are employed part-time this affects a large proportion of women. Amongst women who are eligible to benefits some may not enjoy their rights because they do not know about them or because they fail to fulfil the complicated procedures necessary to qualify. Also significant is the fact that few employers make any special arrangements for mothers on their return to work,

1. An I.R.R.R. survey revealed that only 1.9 per cent of the women covered by their investigation of 261 organizations had taken maternity pay and of these only 0.3 per cent took maternity leave and returned to work (I.R.R.R., 217, p.8).

2. In the study by Daniel just over half (54 per cent) of pregnant employees satisfied the hours and service requirements necessary to qualify for statutory maternity pay and leave.

for example few provide creche facilities, reduced working hours or allow mothers to take nursing breaks (Employers' Policies are discussed in more detail later in this Chapter). The lack of state child care provision also makes it impossible for many women to return to work after the birth of their child.

Inadequate child care provision is one of the major restrictions on mothers entering the labour force, and in limiting their choice of hours and type of work. Thus it could be argued that if governments were genuinely concerned with promoting sex equality they would ensure adequate state child care facilities. The reality, which is outlined in the following section, is however that state child care remains grossly insufficient to meet need and it is estimated that twice as many children whose parents work are cared for by relatives and unregistered minders as attend official day care.

Day Care Provision

Despite the increase in employment among mothers of pre-school children there has not been a similar increase in state day care provision. Indeed there are no state facilities which are specifically designed to care for children from two-parent families where the mother works.

Directly state provided child care falls into two categories: (a) nursery education and (b) day nurseries. The first is the responsibility of the Department of Education and Science and is free. Nursery expansion has been advocated by a number of government documents and in 1972 the White Paper announced the implementation of the proposals laid down in the Plowden Report. This would have involved 90 per cent of 4 year olds and 50 per cent of 3 year olds receiving some sort of nursery education by 1980. The reason for the interest in nursery education is an increasing recognition that young children

need stimulation and that the first few years of a child's life strongly influence later development. Nursery education is however also seen as a possible means to break the so-called 'cycle of deprivation'. Thus Plowden proposed that nursery provision should be established in educational priority areas before expansion took place elsewhere, and while the Report estimated that overall 15 per cent of children would need full-time provision it suggested that 50 per cent of children in 'socially deprived neighbourhoods' might need full-time places (165). The increase in nursery education is however of little use to working mothers because it is predominantly part-time, closed for school holidays and in the main only provides care for children aged three and over. "Nursery education is an important part of the education system: it is only incidentally that it will help parents who are working" (Finer p.103).

Day nurseries, on the other hand, provide places for children aged from a few months to five years, are open for the whole working day and 50 weeks of the year. They are funded by Social Services Departments and are staffed by nursery nurses. Emphasis is on welfare rather than education and this is reflected in the training, pay, low status and lack of career structure of nursery nurses. As N.U.P.E. has argued, the training of nursery nurses "assumes the naturalness of motherhood, female domesticity and provides students with a housewifely education, which equally qualifies the students to work in a nursery, as a nanny or become a mother. The division between care and education is mirrored in the separate occupations of matrons and headteachers" (Brierley et al. p.65).

Places in day nurseries are allocated on a priority basis and their aim is not to provide care for children of 'adequate' two-parent families where

the mother works. Rather, since the War, the priority of day nurseries has been to compensate for the emotional or intellectual deprivation of the child which is believed to result from inadequacies in the mother, the family structure or the environment:

The responsibility of local health authorities should continue to be limited to arranging for the day-care of children who, from a health point of view or because of deprived or inadequate background, have special needs that cannot otherwise be met. (Ministry of Health Circ. 37/68 quoted in Fonda and Moss, p.46)

This circular also specified children of one-parent families as a priority group and the implicit policy in the post war period has been "that priority in day nursery provisions should be given to the children of a lone working parent" (Finer 8,107 - 55 per cent of places are taken by such children). Moreover, day nursery facilities do not even provide sufficient places for priority children and in 1974 12,000 such children were without a place (D.H.S.S. quoted in Labour Research p.78). This situation is unlikely to change since in 1976 the Consultative Document on Priorities for Health and Personal Services predicted "the provision of only about 400 day nursery places annually - not enough to meet priority needs for many years to come" (quoted in Fonda and Moss p.47).

While governments recognize the inadequacy of child care provision their attitude is to "deplore the increasing tendency of mothers of young children to work (Plowden) and to consider the provision of adequate child care facilities as undesirable, because it will encourage this trend, while recognizing that experience shows that this desire (for employment) tends to find an outlet in unsuitable arrangements for the child if suitable ones are not

available" (Finer p.119) and this is also viewed as undesirable. Thus the Plowden Report states that:

some mothers who are not obliged to work may work full time, regardless of their children's welfare. It is no business of the educational service to encourage these mothers to do so. It is true, unfortunately, that the refusal of full time nursery places for their children may prompt some of them to make unsuitable arrangements for their children's care during working hours. All the same, we consider that mothers who cannot satisfy the authorities that they have exceptionally good reasons for working should have low priority for full time nursery for their children" (303)

Similarly the Seeborn Report recognized that "many mothers will continue to work" and that this is unlikely "to be reversed in the foreseeable future" (196) but offers no solution other than to suggest that the level of social security benefits should not be so low as to oblige mothers to work.

The provision of adequate child care facilities is thus identified as possibly encouraging the 'deplorable' increase in employment amongst mothers whilst, at the same time, it is recognised that inadequate provision results in mothers arranging unsuitable care for their children. The conflict is left unresolved and consideration of employment amongst mothers remains noticeably absent from the Finer Report, the 1972 White Paper and the Department of Health Circular 35/72, which deals with development plans for social services.

As to why the state has remained so unresponsive to the needs of working mothers, the explanation lies in the fact that employment among mothers of pre-school children contravenes the ideology of the family and motherhood which is rooted in the Beveridge Report and which has dominated welfare policy in post war Britain. This ideology defined the family as an economic unit with the man as the breadwinner, responsible for the financial support

of his wife and children, and the woman as responsible for the care and socialization of children. Obviously this view of the family relieves governments of great expense since women and children are treated as dependent on men rather than as the responsibility of the government. Universal state child care can thus be seen as a potential threat to the patriarchal family structure by weakening the man's role as breadwinner and the woman's responsibility for the care of her children while the ideology can be maintained if working mothers are treated as a deviant group. Thus "the attitude of governments, irrespective of party, to employed mothers has been in general to discourage them, not through any explicit and elaborated policy, but through failing to provide services geared to the needs of these mothers and neglecting even to discuss these needs" (Tizard et. al. p.142). Exceptions to this rule do exist however and result in contradictions in state policy which will be considered shortly.

The theoretical substance for the assumption that the mother should be responsible for the care of her young child was provided by the popularisation of the research findings of John Bowlby which have also been used to justify the grossly inadequate state child care provision and the extension of child minding. This research purported to show that early separation from the mother irretrievably damages the child. Bowlby's conclusions were however based on research in residential institutions and insufficient recognition has been given to this fact. Thus neither the reasons for the children being in institutions were considered nor the standard of care provided assessed. Bowlby's conclusions were simply extended to all situations involving the separation of mother and child. Moreover, despite research

carried out during the last 25 years which shows that "day care need not necessarily interfere with the mother-child attachment (Caldwell, Wright, Honig and Tannenbaum, 1970), and the available evidence gives no reason to suppose that the use of day nurseries has any long term psychological or physical effects (Yuckin and Holme, 1963)" (Rutter quoted in WEA p. 2). Bowlby's conclusions remain influential. Thus the Finer Report in 1974 reiterated the following statement quoted in a Ministry of Health Circular in 1945:

The Ministers concerned accept the view of medical and other authority that, in the interests of the health and development of the child no less than for the benefit of the mother, the proper place for a child under two is at home with his mother " (Finer p. 105).

Similarly in 1957 the Plowden Report stated that "prolonged and early separation from mothers is known to be disadvantageous" (305) and the Seeborn Report in 1968 affirms "It is widely accepted that it is detrimental to the child to be separated from its mother for long periods during early childhood" (195). Given this consensus, which is used to justify inadequate full-day child care, it appears somewhat contradictory to find that full-day child care is acceptable for two groups of children: (a) children of mothers whose labour skills are in short supply and (b) children from families which are defined as inadequate or unstable.

A contradiction exists in state policy which on the one hand defines the married woman's role as being in the home caring for children and, on the other hand, recognizes the varying economic necessity of the labour of married women and encourages them to enter the work force. Hilary Land notes this contradiction in early post war policy when Beveridge was

designing a welfare plan based on the assumption that married women would not engage in waged work while at the same time the Ministry of Labour "conducted a campaign to stimulate recruitment of women into industry" (Iand p.187). This contradiction remains unresolved in recent government documents. Thus the Plowden Report recognized that "The government, for reasons of economic policy, wish to see more women working" and that employed mothers would be a source of staff for nursery expansion, but went on to reaffirm acceptance of the theory of maternal deprivation:

To work full-time a mother must expect that her child will attend nursery for extended hours and during school holidays. Our evidence is, however, that it is generally undesirable, except to prevent a greater evil, to separate mother and child for a full day in the nursery. We do not believe that full-time nursery places should be provided even for children who might tolerate separation without harm, except for exceptionally good reasons" (303)

"Exceptionally good reasons" however appear to include a shortage of female labour since "in some professions, such as teaching and nursing, the supply of labour is so scarce that the government has approved the provision of nurseries or nursery schools specifically to attract qualified mothers with young children back to work" (Seeborn 195). Indeed teachers' children get priority for nursery places "because this is a condition for the expansion of nursery education under Addendum No. 2 to Circular 8/66" (Plowden 295). No attempt is made to reconcile the contradiction in that it is accepted that it is generally harmful to separate mother and child for a full day but acceptable if the mother is a teacher or nurse.

Similarly acceptance of the theory of maternal deprivation is contradicted by state policy towards children in one parent families where again it is considered acceptable to separate mother and child to enable the mother to work

and the Seeborn Report suggested that the children of married mothers who had to work to augment a very low income were in a similar position to children of single parent families. While the state discourages the majority of mothers from working because of its harmful effects on mother/child relationship it accepts, and even encourages, certain categories of maternal employment.

Thus state policy and attitudes to working mothers is contradictory and depends on the skills and family circumstances of the mother involved. In general, employment among mothers with young children is 'deplored' and discouraged by a total lack of response to the child care needs of working mothers. The resulting lack of child care provision is justified by a theory of maternal deprivation which states that mother/child separation is harmful. However, the theory is contradicted by state policy which encourages full-time employment, and thus mother/child separation, among mothers whose labour skills are in demand and single parents. The first case results from a contradiction within capitalism between the necessity of the labour of married women and the ideology of motherhood. In the case of single mothers child care provision can be justified as a means of reducing welfare payments and it does not challenge the ideology of the family since the male role of breadwinner is not there to be threatened. Nurses, teachers and single mothers are exceptions, however, and state child care is not provided for other 'adequate' working mothers. Without such provision any attempts to achieve economic equality between men and women are severely restricted and this is shown by a brief consideration of the effects of inadequate child care facilities.

Results of Inadequate Child Care Facilities

(a) Mothers who want to work are prevented

The evidence suggests that a considerable number of mothers would like to work outside the home if child care facilities were available. In the 1968 survey of women's employment 42 per cent of the mothers with children under five said that they would consider returning to work sooner if child care facilities were locally available, and only 7 per cent said they definitely would not consider returning sooner. Similarly 22 per cent of the children in the 1974 OPCS sample had mothers who would have liked to have worked if they had been able to make satisfactory arrangements for their children and the 1979 survey commissioned by Woman's Own showed that 27 per cent of the unemployed mothers with pre-school children would like to work. Thus equal pay and equal opportunity legislation has little immediate relevance for a large proportion of mothers who are prevented entering the labour market on any terms.

Moreover, studies suggest that mothers who work outside the home are more resistant to depression than unemployed mothers at home (Feld, Brown et al.), and Moss and Pielis found that non-employed mothers who want to work may be at greater risk of experiencing mental stress than those who are not faced with this conflict. This indicates that government policy on child care has implications for maternal mental health and there is also evidence that poor mental health among mothers has a long term effect on the development of their children.

(b) Choice of child care severely restricted.

While some mothers are prevented from working by the lack of child care facilities other mothers are forced to use arrangements that, given alternatives, they would not choose and it is likely that unsuitable day care increases the conflicts often experienced by working mothers.

The limited evidence which is available suggests that relatives are used more by employed mothers than institutional forms of child care. In 1968 Audrey Hunt concluded from her study of employed women that:

The most striking feature of the care of children of working mothers is the extent to which this is achieved at no cost to the mother, by enlisting the help of other members of the family (quoted in Fonda and Moss p.23).

This conclusion is also supported by more recent research and the OPCS study showed that nearly 29 per cent of the children of lone working parents, and about 50 per cent of the children with two parents and a working mother, were cared for by relatives, friends or neighbours. Similarly a study of 1,600 mothers in the South West and Glamorgan (1974) found that up to 44 per cent of the children, aged 3½ years old, were looked after by their fathers while their mother worked (Tizard et. al. p.136) and two surveys in 1975 (C.R.C. and L.S.D.C.) found that nearly half of the mothers interviewed relied on relatives for child care.

Although reliance on relatives for child care is often free the C.R.C. study (1975) revealed a high degree of dissatisfaction among mothers who used this form of child care. "A third of the mothers using the 'split-shift' system of child care with their husbands were dissatisfied with this method of child rearing; a fifth of the mothers using grandmothers, and half of the mothers using other relatives for child care were unhappy about the

care the child received" (Summary, p.4). Similarly research in Handsworth found that in most instances the split-shift system of child care "was resorted to after attempts at obtaining provision outside the home had failed, or because the hours of care possible did not meet the family's requirements according to their work patterns" (L.S.D.C. p.39).

Apart from relatives the other major source of child care used by working mothers is childminders and figures for 1973 show that registered childminders cared for more children than the total number of places provided by local authority, private and factory day nurseries:

Local Authority day nurseries	23,838 places
Registered private/voluntary premises providing all-day care (i.e. private, voluntary and factory nurseries)	25,247 children permitted
Registered day minders providing full-time care	57,042 children permitted

(Tizard et. al. p.127)

The extent of unregistered childminding remains largely a matter for speculation but, as Brian and Sonia Jackson have argued, the day care arrangements of between 250,000 and 310,000 pre-school children of working mothers were not contained in official statistics in the later 1970s and the Jacksons estimate that upwards of 100,000 of these children spent their days with unregistered minders (p.182).

Again, however, the evidence suggests that, given an option, few mothers would choose the existing system of minding for their children. The 1974 OPCS survey found that only 3 per cent of mothers wanted childminding and that of those mothers using minders 71 per cent would have preferred some other form of provision. Similarly when mothers in a TCRU survey (of 229 children) were asked what form of pre-school provision they wanted only two chose childminding (Mayall and Patrie, p.57).

Since nursery schools, day nurseries and play groups are not designed to cater for the needs of full-time employed mothers, and because the costs of private day nurseries are high, these women have little alternative but to seek the help of relatives or to pay childminders to care for their children while they work. These arrangements often do not provide adequate care for the children and the evidence suggests a high degree of maternal dissatisfaction with these forms of care. Despite this, however, childminding is a form of provision which has received increasing official interest. Nurseries are castigated as being institutionalized and expensive while childminding is envisaged as a cheaper form of care providing more individual and maternal attention. Thus the DHSS Consultative Document on Priorities attaches "high priority" to "experiment with informal and less expensive types of local authority day care" and the Finer Report states:

We believe that for the children of working mothers, and particularly where the mother works full time, local authorities should be encouraged to develop comprehensive day fostering, or family day care services" (P.131).

The extension of childminding is justified on the basis that it is a cheaper and more maternal form of child care and both these assumptions can be challenged. As the E.O.C. notes, a good child minding scheme costs nearly as much as placing a child in a day nursery (p.16) and the findings of Mayall and Petrie lead Tizard to conclude that "the quality of care provided by many childminders is very far from maternal" (Intro. to Mayall and Petrie, p.11).

The needs and wishes of employed mothers are ignored and the notion of maternal deprivation is used to justify the inadequate state provision of child care. The result is that mothers are forced to use provision for

the care of their children which is often unsuitable both in terms of the needs of the child and the needs of the working mother.

(c) Choice of employment restricted

Employed mothers of pre-school children are concentrated at the bottom of the skill and earnings table (see Chapter 2) and one reason for this is that mothers are limited to jobs with hours that correspond with available child care provision and "a high proportion of mothers who need or wish to go out to work must work when the father is at home to look after the children, i.e. evenings, weekends or sometimes overnight" (University of Bristol quoted in Fonda and Moss p.11). This is supported by the Woman's Own survey which found that one-third of mothers of pre-school children were working evenings or nights (n.22). Similarly mothers whose children attend nursery schools or playgroups are often restricted to part-time work and the recent increase in maternal employment is due largely to the growth of this form of employment, since the proportion of women with children under five working full-time has remained constant at between 5 and 6 per cent (Hunt 1968, 1971 and 1974 Census).

(d) Implications for West Indian and Asian Mothers

West Indian and Asian mothers suffer the same general consequences of inadequate child care facilities as white women but in addition it is significant that the majority of black families in Britain are surviving on a low income and the Jacksons' research indicates that the poorer you are the less chance you have of obtaining a state nursery place (n.190). Also important is the high economic activity rate of West Indian women and the emphasis on full-time, rather than part-time, employment amongst both

West Indian and Asian women. Their need is for a cheap and local provision which is open for long hours.

Research evidence on the child care arrangements of West Indian mothers indicates that this group of women are particularly likely to use unregistered childminders. Thus a majority of the children of the employed West Indian mothers surveyed by Stroud and Moody (1967), Gregory (1969) and Hood et. al (1970) were left with childminders and, on the basis of this evidence, Brian and Sonia Jackson estimate that 50,000 West Indian children in Britain spend their days with unregistered minders (p.178). This figure represents as much as 50 per cent of all children whom the Jacksons calculate are left with illegal minders while their mothers work (p.183).

A disturbing aspect of this evidence is that the standard of child care provided by the minders is frequently inadequate. In her study of 56 childminders in Paddington Gregory reports that a third of the minders said they would leave the children unattended while they went shopping, ten admitted to having neither the time nor the inclination to play with the children, a large number of whom were confined all day to one room, and in seven cases there were no toys. In addition, safety measures were non-existent. Similarly, Hood et. al. concluded that in the majority of the cases they investigated the standard of care provided was 'grossly inadequate'.

Standards of child care provided by minders obviously vary but, on the basis of their experience, the Jacksons conclude that "the poorer pay least and get the weakest service for their child, and that the better-off pay a little more and get excellent service" (p.190). Childminders serving the poor

have to offer very competitive rates and often compensate for low individual fees by minding large numbers of children. Also, minders tend to live in the same area as the children they mind and thus experience the same deprivations as the mothers who employ them. The Jacksons provide case studies of minders who provide a totally inadequate standard of care and they suggest a possible connection between childminding and the high proportion of West Indian children attending schools for the educationally subnormal. Similarly the National Elfrida Rathbone society was stimulated to try to improve the standard of care offered by childminders by the "furore over the fact that West Indian children featured far too prominently in the city's E.S.N. schools" (p.1).

Any consideration of the reasons for the over-representation of West Indian children in E.S.N. schools must take account of the selection process. As Coard has argued, the white bias of the test situation discriminates against the black child, and many children are tested shortly after they arrive in this country when they may still be suffering from culture shock. Also important is the discrimination of teachers and the identity problems among black children which have been demonstrated by Milner. Nevertheless the evidence does indicate that standards of child care provided by minders are frequently inadequate and that because of insufficient state provision, and the consequential high demand for childminders, local authorities are reluctant to enforce even minimum standards. The solution, however, is more complex than simply increasing existing day nursery provision - the poor are often deterred from even seeking a place.

Three-quarters of the mothers interviewed by Gregory had not considered a day nursery when they opted for a minder to solve their child care problems. The women were deterred by the distance to the nursery and by the means-tested charge. A childminder was often nearer and cheaper. Also, the frequent delay between applying for, and obtaining, a day nursery place eliminates the possibility of this form of provision for women who have a job to start immediately. Childminders are more flexible about initially accepting children and about the hours they are prepared to care for the children which is a crucial consideration where the mother works irregular or shift hours. Childminders are more inclined to respond to the individual needs of the mother and, for example, to mind older children in school holidays. Thus, even if existing state provision was increased dramatically some mothers would choose alternative arrangements because of cost, distance, and flexibility.

The C.R.C. survey (1976) found that amongst Asian mothers their preference was for "reliable, attentive care, near to their home and reasonably priced, preferably from someone who could help the child learn English, with an opportunity to play with English children" (p.31). Thus although the limited evidence shows that a high proportion of employed Asian mothers rely on family members for child care (C.R.C., Jackson) this is not considered a satisfactory arrangement by many of the mothers (C.R.C., Uberoi). Day nursery provision may however be too costly or distant to be considered, or unobtainable since the vast majority of Asian mothers are married and thus not a priority for state child care.

While existing provision of state day nursery places is grossly insufficient the solution to the child care needs of employed mothers is more complex than a simple extension of present facilities. Employed mothers need cheap, local and flexible provision, and, at present, this is often only provided by childminders or relatives. However, the standard of child care provided by these options is often inadequate and mothers are frequently dissatisfied. Nevertheless governments have remained largely unresponsive to the child care needs of the increasing number of employed mothers and their attitude is similar to that of the husbands interviewed by Judith Hubback which was "patronizing and fairly selfish. He approved of his wife working provided it did not interfere with his own comfort, because it 'gave her an interest', and - significantly - so long as she was not regarded as a breadwinner. Although a number of husbands were more constructive and helpful, the overriding impression was that the wife's work should be ideally 'a hobby that pays for itself'" (quoted in Wilson, 1980, p. 58). Similarly the assumption that a woman's primary role is in the home, as the dependent of her husband, is also reflected in employers' attitudes towards women waged workers. Acceptance of this ideology has implications for all women since even single childless women are regarded as potential wives and mothers and their role in the workforce is considered secondary to their central role as reproducers. I shall therefore consider employers' attitudes and policies towards women waged workers in general before considering the additional, and specific, oppression of employed mothers.

Employers' Attitudes and Policies Towards Employed Mothers

The presumption that all women are, or will be, housewives and that men should be the breadwinners affects recruitment, promotion, pay and training since "employers have rarely taken women's work as seriously as men's" (Mackie and Pattullo, p. 46). The belief among management that work is more central to men than to women is illustrated in Hunt's survey which found that approximately 46 per cent of those interviewed thought that 'women's place is in the home' (p. 66) and that the reason why so few women rise to senior positions, or do skilled work, is that 'women are not career conscious' (p. 10). This attitude was expressed despite the fact that "a majority of those responsible for the engagement of employees start off with the belief that a woman applicant is likely to be inferior to a man in respect of all the qualities considered important" (p. 17). Consequently when asked whether they would have chosen a man or a woman for a job if they had identical characteristics the only jobs for which a majority would choose a woman is domestic or catering work (p. 17).

It is significant that domestic and catering jobs were chosen by employers as best performed by women since these jobs reflect the major characteristics of most 'women's work' in that they are low paid and the only skills they utilise are those which have traditionally been defined as feminine attributes. Indeed a notable feature of the work structure is the sexual segregation within industries and occupations with women concentrated in low paid, low skilled jobs (see Chapter 7).

As to why women are concentrated at the bottom of the labour structure the most common explanations offered by personnel managers interviewed in Hunt's survey were that it 'has always been a man's job' or that women lack the necessary skills, qualifications or physical strength. Women were considered unsuitable for

technical or skilled jobs but the managers believed that women possess greater patience and manual dexterity than men, and have an aptitude for dull, repetitive work. Similarly Colleen Chesterman found that personnel officers defend the situation "with naturalistic 'common-sense' explanations" one is constantly told 'this job is too heavy/too dirty for a woman'" (p.14). The inadequacy of this explanation is shown by King who found that whatever the attributes required for most jobs there will be some men and some women capable of performing them (Hunt p. 23) and also women did many of the skilled jobs during the Second World War. Moreover, "when those who had mentioned lack of qualifications were asked whether a suitably qualified woman would be considered, an appreciable proportion of them (more than half in the case of foreman and apprentices) said she would not" (Hunt p. 22). Women were seen as excelling at dull and repetitive work (Hunt p.14) and, in reply to Pollert's questionnaire on employee recruitment policy at Imperial Tobacco, a personnel officer wrote "we want those who are not so bright that they will be bored by the repetitive work, and yet, bright enough to apply themselves to it and not risk injury on the machines" (p. 81). A majority of managers in Hunt's study were unenthusiastic about the possibility of the appointment of women to senior posts since only 40 per cent thought it would be a good thing (p. 11). However this prejudice is lessened when a shortage of labour exists and a majority of respondents (over 65 per cent) thought it would be a good thing if more women were trained for skilled work (p.65). What is clear moreover is that jobs which are defined as 'men's work' are accorded greater status and pay than 'women's work' and, as noted in Chapter 1, this is defended by the trade unions who have fought for the notion of a man's wage as a family wage which "invokes men's duty to support the family on the one hand and the family's right to be supported, on the other." (Campbell and Charlton, p.32).

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Another possible explanation for the concentration of women in low paid, unskilled jobs is that a woman is only appointed to jobs unaccetable to men because "women are of limited value as employees because of their protected status under the law" (Davies p.116). Factory Acts limit women's overtime to seven hours a week and special exemption is required for them to work nights. Although only 12 per cent (97 per cent of these in manufacturing industries) of managers interviewed in Hunt's survey regarded such statutory restrictions as a problem it is possible that particularly the recent Employment Protection Act reduces the attractiveness of female employees. Indeed the maternity provisions of this Act highlight a major difference between men and women employees in that a woman's reproductive role often means that she cannot, or does not wish to, conform to the male defined work structure. As previously mentioned this affects all women since they are considered potential child-bearers and as "belonging to a sex whose members habitually leave employment for maternal duties" (Davies, p.116). Thus even young single childless women are often not considered worth training and only half of the managers in Hunt's survey disagreed with the statement, 'It is not worth training young women for more skilled work because they leave after a few years to have families' (p.66)

Women workers were, however, considered more easy to manipulate than men. Sixty-five per cent of Hunt's sample of managers thought women were less likely to join unions than men, and less inclined to take industrial action. Similarly Pollert found that the stereotype of women as "suckers, 'nice', hardworking and easy to handle" was confirmed by her study of personnel managers (p.81).

Working Mothers

Unfortunately there is little research into employers' attitudes towards working mothers but the fact that they are concentrated in even lower paid, lower skilled jobs than women generally (see Chapter 2) suggests that they suffer further discrimination. It appears that working mothers are seen as even less worth training than young girls and evidence from the clothing industry indicates that only where there is an acute shortage of skilled labour is the training of older women considered:

Employers are being forced to examine their recruitment strategy, for the thousands of girl school leavers who have traditionally been the mainstay of the clothing factories no longer find life as a sewing machinist an attractive proposition. The alternative is the older woman, who up to now has been curtly dismissed as unsuitable training material. Until recently it has not been thought possible to train anyone over the age of twenty-five as a flat machinist if she has never before used an industrial sewing machine. This extraordinary contention comes from the introduction to *In Lieu of School Leavers*, a sympathetic inquiry on behalf of the Clothing and Allied Products ITB (1973) into how the industry should reassess its training techniques to accommodate the now much-needed older woman employee" (Mackie and Pattullo, p.105)

Similarly, in an article about the industrial benefits of company nurseries, Tony Earle indicates that the recruitment of women with children is considered a second-rate substitute for young girls. After having stated that in the past it has mainly been 15 year old girls who have entered unskilled factory work Earle goes on to say:

a smaller proportion of 16 year-old school leavers from 1973-4 are likely to be interested in repetitive factory work. The extra year of education... will open up more opportunities of higher level work for them and increase their expectations from their work. In these circumstances, the pressures on some firms to establish a nursery are bound to increase, and new constructive thinking is needed in the whole field of female recruitment" (p.45).

While the assumption that mothers should be solely responsible for child rearing persists, and while child care facilities are inadequate, women will withdraw from the labour market at certain periods in their lives and at present this interruption in waged work frequently retards a woman's career progress. However, it would be possible to redefine the work structure so that fathers could take a more active role in child care, and the provision of adequate child care facilities and retraining etc. would enable mothers to compete on more equal terms. Meanwhile, because of financial pressures and career aspirations, men with children have consistently higher rates of overtime than men without (Moss) and a man's role in the family is regarded simply in terms of his role as breadwinner while women are left to carry the burden of ensuring that domestic demands are fulfilled. Generally employers are reluctant to provide facilities to enable mothers to combine the roles of producer and reproducer and Klein, for example, found that only one in six of the 120 employers in her sample made any special allowances for the domestic commitments of their women employees (pp. 26-30).

(a) Company Maternity Arrangements

Since the introduction of the Employment Protection Act, outlined earlier in this Chapter, women, who have fulfilled certain conditions, have the right to return to work after maternity leave and the Act lays down their minimum statutory pay and leave entitlement. The practical application of the Act's provisions, however, varies between companies who can take either a positive or a negative approach. For example, employers can either take positive steps to notify their employees of their legal rights or they can exploit employees' ignorance. A subscriber survey of 261

organizations, by the Industrial Relations Review and Report staff, sought to establish how companies have responded to the maternity pay and reinstatement provisions of the E.P.A. I.R.R.R., 217 and 218, Feb. 1980) and Bargaining Report examined the maternity arrangements of the twenty largest U.K. employers, and fifty maternity schemes which were more generous than the legal minimum (May/June 1980).

By 1980 over half (55 per cent) of the respondents to the I.R.R.R. survey had experienced both the maternity pay and leave provisions of the E.P.A. The majority felt that the Act was working well and few (18 per cent) provided benefits in excess of the statutory minimum. Of the ten largest industrial companies considered by Bargaining Report 9 followed the statutory minimum provisions while 6 of the 10 largest public sector employers provided benefits for women with only one year's service and gave maternity pay for two months or longer. Thirty-six of the 50 companies considered by Bargaining Report, who improved on the minimum legal entitlement, gave women paid leave after one year's service, a further five reduced the qualifying period to 21 months or less, and women employed by the National Coal Board were automatically entitled to paid maternity leave. A number of agreements in the public sector permitted women to carry over accumulated service to other employers, e.g. the Water Service recognized previous service with the gas and electricity industries and other public sector employers with reciprocal pension arrangements.

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1. Similarly a study by Daniel indicates that the statutory maternity provisions do not pose problems for employers

The statutory provision of 40 weeks maternity leave in the U.K. is longer than in other E.E.C. countries (I.R.R.R., 217, p.8) and only two of the companies surveyed by I.R.R.R., and seven of those examined by Bargaining Report extended this period. In certain cases, mainly for health and safety reasons, companies required a pregnant woman to leave or transfer employment before the 11th week prior to confinement, while pregnant women employed by the Post Office were "normally expected to continue in employment until the sixth week before confinement" (I.R.R.R., 218, p.3).

Statutory maternity pay provisions in Britain are less generous than in other E.E.C. countries and yet only 20 of those employers surveyed by I.R.R.R. provided maternity pay in excess of the statutory minimum. Thirteen of these provided more than six weeks paid leave and this applied to women who had been with the firm for less than two years, while a further seven made more generous provision than the Act stipulates but this was restricted to employees who fulfilled the two years' service qualification. Of the 50 organizations considered by Bargaining Report, however, the maternity pay of 47 was higher than the basic entitlement. In some cases the additional maternity pay was conditional upon the woman returning to work. Approximately one-quarter of the 2,000 women in Daniel's study, who received maternity pay, were paid more than the statutory minimum.

The Employment Protection Act stipulates that maternity leave counts as a period of service for computation of statutory rights such as redundancy, notice and unfair dismissal and in effect the woman should be

treated as if she had not been absent. As regards contractual rights, such as holidays, pension, seniority, the period of absence on maternity leave does not count, according to the Act, for computation purposes. Some companies do however permit contractual rights, with the exception of holiday entitlement, to accrue during the period of absence. Eighty-three of the organizations surveyed by I.R.R.R. count the period of absence during maternity leave for pension purposes and continue to pay the contributions although in five companies this only occurs for six weeks. Thirteen companies give women the option of making up pension contributions on return to work.

A criticism widely levelled against the Employment Protection Act is the lack of publicity of the maternity provisions with the result that some women may remain unaware of their rights. A number of the companies surveyed, however, took positive steps to notify their employees of the position and some personnel officers encourage all pregnant employees to take maternity leave in order to preserve their right to return should they so decide. Companies are likely to benefit from contact with pregnant employees in that they may be able to obtain more information than the woman is legally required to provide and thus be able to predict more accurately the likelihood of her returning to work after maternity leave.¹

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1. Articles in I.R.R.R., Nos. 149 and 146, indicate ways in which personnel managers can obtain information on which to make predictions about the likely behaviour of individual women and the administrative practices designed by companies to obtain this information as early as possible. This is an attempt to overcome one of the main complaints of the legislation which is the long period companies often have to wait before knowing if a woman will return to her work - 60 per cent of the women included in the I.R.R.R. survey stated that they intended to return by but only 15 per cent actually returned. No. 217, p.7).

In practice only a minority of pregnant working women actually take maternity leave and return to work and possibly more important than maternity provision, in influencing a mother's decision about returning to work, is employment and child care options. It is significant therefore that very few (16 per cent) of the organizations surveyed by I.R.R.R. made any special arrangements for mothers on their return to work - e.g. reduced working hours or the provision of creche facilities.

(b) Company Nurseries

One of the most direct means by which employers could encourage return to work by women after maternity leave, and generally increase the employment opportunities available to mothers of pre-school children, would be by the provision of child care facilities. However, only a very small number of employers, responding to the I.R.R.R. survey, provide any child care facilities (218, p.6) and the attitude seems to be that "employers do not consider themselves social services agencies" (Institute of Personnel Management in Mackie and Pattullo). The majority of managers in Hunt's survey believed that it is the responsibility of government or trade unions, rather than the responsibility of firms, to improve women's employment opportunities (p.20), and consequently the cost involved in providing a nursery must be justified on other grounds. Thus it is little surprise that company nurseries "are rarely part of a comprehensive scheme to advance women's opportunities" but in the vast majority of cases are provided "to overcome a shortage of labour" (T.U.C. Under 5's).

Where female labour is scarce, a nursery can therefore contribute to profitability by reducing or eliminating the production holdups caused by this labour shortage ... The benefits to a company operating a successful nursery in an area of short female labour are impressive. For example, a 50 place nursery would enable a firm to obtain at least an extra 85,000 woman hours annually that otherwise would not have been available. The extra labour gained can be used for clerical or factory work, but it should be made clear from the outset that places at a nursery can only be allotted to women going to work in the departments where recruiting is a problem. This is very important, or otherwise the benefits to the company will be diluted" (Earle, p. 44/5).

In view of these 'impressive' benefits the fact that in 1974 only 81 factory nurseries existed, providing places for about 2,000 children (Mackie and Pattullo, p. 127), seems to indicate that there is little shortage of female labour.

With few exceptions the initiative for setting up these nurseries came from management, and unions have rarely been involved in the early stages of planning since the traditional view of the Trade Union Movement towards the provision of company nurseries has been one of scepticism deriving from the belief that they are used to keep wages low and retain staff despite poor prospects and conditions. Moreover, this scepticism seems to be justified since the nursery is regarded as a privilege not to be abused and the threat of withdrawing the use of the facility can be used as a means of controlling labour:

The nursery places are likely to be scarce and if a firm can build up a waiting list, it should not hesitate to withdraw the use of this facility if a woman has a bad absenteeism record. The realisation that the nursery place is scarce and sought after is most likely to make women watch their attendance (Earle, p. 45).

Thus the major motivation for the establishment of company nurseries appears to be a severe shortage of female labour and the facility can also

be used to control the work performance of those women whose children use the day care. Company nurseries are not primarily provided to improve women's employment opportunities and a very small proportion of management interviewed in Hunt's survey (0.4 per cent of formulators and 1.1 per cent of implementers) mentioned that the firm should provide child care facilities (p.170).

(c) Retraining after absence from employment

Without adequate child care facilities a large proportion of women will have to withdraw from the labour market for a substantial period of time when they have a child. However, although about 25 per cent of those interviewed in the 1973 survey believed that women were concentrated in low level jobs because of interruptions in their working lives (p.10) employers do not appear anxious to rectify this situation. Thus the survey showed that a quarter of employers would treat a woman returning to work as if she were a new applicant and only 24 per cent would provide some form of refresher course (p.128).

(d) Leave to care for sick children

Similarly, it is inevitable that on occasions parents (normally the mother) will have to take time off work when their child is ill and yet the T.U.C. reports that there are only a few collective agreements which make provision for such leave.

The conclusion which seems to emerge, therefore, is that while employers constantly explain the concentration of women in low paid, low skilled jobs in terms of their reproductive role, management is unwilling to provide facilities which would ease this situation. One possible explanation for this

unwillingness, in addition to cost, is that women's role in the home can be used to the benefit of employers and I shall consider two types of employment, where women with children predominate, to illustrate this point: (i) homework and (ii) part-time employment.

Homework

Homework is the only employment option available to women who are housebound because of domestic responsibilities since it allows them to earn money while at the same time caring for the home and children¹. However, because alternative employment is not a possibility, homeworkers are especially vulnerable and probably the most exploited and underprivileged sector of the workforce.

It is impossible to accurately determine the extent of homeworking since local authorities do not publish the information they have (which in any case is unreliable and often out of date), but Townsend estimated that there are about a quarter of a million homeworkers. This estimate is however based on a very limited definition of homework and the actual number is likely to be higher (T.U.C. Homework, p.3). The definition of homework adopted by the T.U.C. is "work done in the home for another person or for sale to another person" (p.2) and thus includes the 30,000 registered, and estimated 100,000 - 500,000 unregistered, childminders (T.U.C. The Under 5's, p.37) who form the largest single category of

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homeworkers. Other homeworkers are employed in the clothing and textile industries, engineering work and are involved in clerical tasks such as envelope addressing. The work is often tedious and repetitive although many homeworkers are skilled in their particular trade (e.g. sewing). Despite the diversity of industries and jobs in which homeworkers are involved, however, studies indicate that they share common characteristics in that they are 'trapped' in the home and that it is economically necessary for them to work although the vast majority receive exploitative rates of pay. A recent survey by the Low Pay Unit found that 17 of the 22 homeworkers contacted received 50p or less an hour. Out of this money homeworkers have to pay their own overheads (heating, lighting etc.), frequently have to purchase their equipment (e.g. sewing machines, typewriter ribbons) and do not receive holiday or sickness benefits. However because of the nature of the work, in that it is performed in the home between domestic chores and usually paid by a piece rate system, the homeworkers are often not aware of their hourly rate of pay (see Hope, Kennedy and DeWinter p.97). Moreover, despite these exploitative conditions there appears to be a large demand for homework and "the homeworkers are frightened of complaining in case they lose their jobs" (Mackie and Pattullo, p.69).

Benefits to Employers

Obviously the major incentive for employers to use home labour is the financial advantage involved. As I have indicated the rates of pay are exceptionally low and the employer has few legal obligations to his workers since they are generally defined as self-employed. Consequently, national

Insurance contributions, redundancy payments and PAYE deductions etc. are saved. Moreover, factory facilities are not needed and overhead costs are the responsibility of the homemaker who often has to provide the equipment necessary. In addition, a further advantage is that homeworkers provide a flexible pool of labour to be employed when there is a boost in production since they can be laid off without compensation. "Employers of homeworkers cope with competition, fluctuations in product demand and the general uncertainties of their business by using, on a temporary basis, an available pool of skilled or semi skilled labour. This keeps their cost down and avoids their taking risks by investing in buildings, machinery and a regular work force" (Hope, Kennedy and De Winter, p.97).

The majority of homeworkers are women who are forced to work at home because of the assumption that women should care for old people and children. Employers benefit from homeworkers since they provide a cheap and flexible supply of labour. Cheapness and flexibility are also characteristics of part-time workers, who again are predominately women with children, and it is this sector of labour that I move on to consider.

Part-Time Employment

The 1971 Census showed that a majority of employed mothers with a youngest child under five worked under 30 hours a week and this is officially defined as part-time work. As with homework, part-time employment is a form of employment performed in the main by women who, because of domestic responsibilities, cannot, or do not want to, work full-time. The typical part-time worker is a married woman, aged over 35 with a small family (Dept. of Employment Gazette in Hurstfield, p.11). Thus, although

part-time work is generally treated as an aberration it is in fact the norm for women at a particular stage in their life cycle since it allows women to combine the contradictory demands of home and paid work. Indeed in June 1976 about 2 out of every 5 women workers were employed part-time and an even higher proportion of women work part-time at some stage. The majority of these part-time workers are employed in the service sector rather than in manufacturing (84 per cent. Hurstfield, p.18).

Thus part-time employment, like homework, is largely performed by women (only 1 male worker in 20 works part-time. Chesterman, p.98) whose employment options are restricted because of their reproductive role. Moreover, part-time work shares characteristics with homework in that it is low paid, often irregular and without fringe benefits or prospects.

The correlation between low pay and part-time employment is clearly demonstrated by Hurstfield who, using the 1977 N.E.S. data, shows that while only one man in a hundred was earning below 85p an hour, 1 in 10 full-time women and nearly 1 in 5 part-time women were earning this wage rate (p.27), and "even when we compare the earnings of full-time and part-time women's earnings within the same occupation, we find a higher proportion of part-time workers are very low paid" (p.29). Moreover, these lower rates of pay exist despite the fact that a high proportion of part-time workers are employed during unsocial hours (Hurstfield p.48) which would elicit extra payment for many full-time employees. Similarly, whereas full-timers obviously must be allowed meal breaks, part-time shifts may be arranged to eliminate breaks.

A careful arrangement of shift starting times can make better use of equipment, since no allowance for long meal breaks need be made (C.B.I., Employing Women: The Employers' View in Hurstfield, p.46)

Furthermore, while the 1976 General Household Survey shows that nearly 80 per cent of full-time employees are covered by employers' sick pay schemes (Hurstfield, p. 41) Hunt found that in only 50 per cent of firms she covered were any part-timers eligible for sick pay. Similarly the CIR survey of the retail trade found that only 34 per cent of part-time women employees were covered by sick pay schemes (CIR Retail Distribution Report, No. 19, 1974 p. 173). Neither are the majority of part-timers eligible for the firm's pension schemes - the 1973 OPCS survey found that in only 14 per cent of the establishments which employed part-timers were any of them eligible for the pension schemes (Hunt, p. 18) - and nearly a quarter (23 per cent) of respondents in Hurstfield's survey said they were not entitled to any paid holidays.

In many of the jobs at which part-timers are employed there are no opportunities for more skilled work and Hunt's survey found that in only 17 per cent of establishments employing part-time workers were there any opportunities for them to be promoted. Only 27 per cent of the firms provided part-time workers with any training facilities. Part-timers also tend to be more vulnerable to job loss than full-time workers and it is not uncommon for policies to exist whereby part-time employees are the first to lose their jobs in a redundancy situation although this practice was successfully challenged in 1982 under the Sex Discrimination Act. The protection given by the Employment Protection Act is restricted to employees working at least 16 hours a week with two year's continuous service and to those working eight hours with five year's continuous service. As a result over one million workers, in addition to those who cannot acquire 'continuous

employment' because they have time off during school holidays, are not eligible for redundancy pay or maternity benefits.

Benefits to Employers

Although the demand for part-time employment results from the contradictory roles of women as both domestic and waged workers it has also developed in response to the needs of capitalism. Firstly, there were shortages of full-time labour in sectors of employment where low wages and poor conditions made the work unattractive to men. This impetus for firms to recruit part-time married women was noted by Jenhcott in her study of a Peak Free factory in Bermondsey during the 1950s:

When the population of Bermondsey was halved as a result of the war employers found peacetime expansion hindered by severe labour shortage ... The firm's policy governing the employment of women clearly demanded review ... and married women were engaged on a new basis as part-time workers (p.66).

Similarly, in the mid 1960s, Klein found that the fact that part-timers are more readily available in sufficient numbers" was a major advantage (Klein, p.131 in Hurstfield, p.50), and nearly 10 years later Hunt concluded that part-time workers are frequently regarded as second class workers only to be employed if full-timers are not available (p.152).

Thus part-timers benefit employers since the existence of a large number of women, who do not have the option of working full-time because of domestic commitments, means that this reserve can be drawn upon for jobs that less vulnerable sectors of the labour force would not accept. Furthermore, part-time workers are also a flexible supply of labour and "because they are not considered part of the normal establishment, they can more easily be declared redundant when circumstances dictate a reduction

of the labour force" (Klein p.131 in Hurstfield, p.50). This conclusion was again reaffirmed by Hunt who found that part-time employees were chiefly valued for their dispensability, and in 1972 Chesterman wrote:

Evidently employers have found it advantageous to use part-time working in order to cover short term market or seasonal fluctuations, and particularly useful over the mini-boom of 1973-4. Little advertising is needed to recruit a relatively tame labour force quickly, complementing a longer term policy of shedding labour through the process of rationalisation which goes hand in hand with technological change. The part-time labour force may then be shed in the face of recession, and shed with extraordinary rapidity. As the figures for electrical engineering show, they are fired instead of the full timers: in the two years from 1974 38 per cent of the female part time workforce lost their jobs, compared to 15 per cent of the full time female workers (p.99).

The flexible nature of part-time employees is used in two ways in manufacturing industries. Firstly, twilight and other shifts, which can utilise the labour of married women, are often introduced to cope with a boost in production and part-timers are recruited on a short-term contract. This use of part-timers is illustrated by the situation, reported by Chesterman, which existed at C.E.C. in Coventry.

If you are running at maximum capacity and still want to produce more, you must do it out of the normal 40 hours. If it is a large job, it cannot be contained in normal overtime working, then the only answer is an evening shift. In telecommunications orders are unequal; they come in peaks and troughs. The normal peaks are covered by overtime, but this can't be increased beyond a certain point without increasing the day shift (p.159).

Part-time labour is also used, however, to cover predictable seasonal fluctuations and although this is particularly prevalent in the food processing industry Chesterman found that part-time weavers are recruited for an evening shift during a period of high demand over the summer by a firm which manufactures woven name tapes (p.116).

The demand for part-time workers in the service sector is somewhat different from manufacturing industries in that they are employed at specific times of the day (e.g. school meal servers) or days of the week (e.g. Friday and Saturday in the retail trade). Once again, however, part-timers are often expected to change their hours to coincide with the requirements of employers:

We need to be able to adjust our staff levels not only from hour to hour, but from day to day, from week to week, and from month to month... To achieve full flexibility in staffing, every part-timer must be prepared to work when needed... The country is full of married women who welcome a week off, or reduced hours now and then, but who are equally happy with a fuller working week occasionally (R.A. Forrester, Retail and Distribution Management, Nov/Dec 1976 p.19 in Hurstfield, p.52).

The flexible nature of part-time labour is thus a major advantage to employers, and this flexibility is largely due to the fact that the majority of part-timers are women whose primary role is seen as in the home. Thus it is assumed that she "does not attach much importance to her work and... therefore does not deserve the same pay, conditions or respect as full-time employees" (Hurstfield, p.11).

Recent State Policies and Employers' Attitudes

Recent legislation has had little impact on the subordinate position of women in the labour force and, since the War, the demand for day care for the children of employed mothers has been largely ignored by successive governments. Maternity rights in Britain are amongst the least generous in Europe and there is no statutory right to paternity leave in this country. Child care is currently defined as the primary responsibility of mothers.

Despite the Sex Discrimination Act the government itself engages in discriminatory practices and the social security system rests on the assumption that women are, or should be, dependent on a male breadwinner. Thus married and cohabiting women cannot at present claim Supplementary Benefit, and no low-paid married woman can draw Family Income Supplement. As a result of an E.E.C. Directive (79/7), however, the British government will soon be forced to amend the regulations governing the social security system, including Supplementary Benefit and F.I.S., so that men and women receive equal treatment. Two other outstanding discriminatory benefits, The Housewife's Non-Contributory Invalidity Pension and the Invalid Care Allowance, will not however be amended. Both these benefits are based on the assumption that the primary role of married women is that of domestic labourer. The Standard Non-Contributory Pension is paid to men and single women who are incapable of paid employment while married and cohabiting women can claim only if they cannot perform 'normal household duties' in addition to being unable to engage in waged work. Married and cohabiting women are not eligible to receive an Invalid Care Allowance which is available to all men and single women who stay at home to care for a disabled friend or relative receiving an Attendance Allowance.

The assumption that a woman's primary role is in the home, as the financial dependant of a man, is similarly reflected in employers' attitudes towards women waged workers. Thus women are perceived as 'not career conscious' and the wage work of women is rarely defined as important as that of men. Facilities to enable women to combine the roles of producer and reproducer are rarely provided by employers except where

there is an acute shortage of labour and yet employers benefit from the dual role of women in that it provides them with a cheap and flexible supply of labour.

Primary importance has not, however, always been attached to women's roles as wives and mothers by governments and employers and emphasis has shifted between women's roles as producers and reproducers during different periods of capitalism. As the following Chapter outlines, both government and employers encouraged married women to enter the labour force during the Second World War and a range of facilities, including day nurseries, were provided to enable women to combine paid work with their role as domestic labourers.

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CHAPTER 4

WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT AND FAMILY POSITION IN BRITAIN DURING AND SINCE THE SECOND WORLD WAR

This Chapter takes as its starting point the Second World War because this War had a significant impact on the pattern of women's employment in Britain. The War witnessed the first large scale entry of married women onto the labour market, and the expansion of the welfare and service industries in the immediate Post-War period maintained the demand for female labour. These broad trends are examined in this Chapter while a more detailed account of the recent employment situation of women in Britain is provided in Chapter 2. Also, since women's position within the labour force both influences and is influenced by their family position this must be considered. Thus, this Chapter examines the role of women both in production and within the family during the War and in the Post-War period and points to the contradictory aims of government which was simultaneously trying to re-establish traditional family patterns whilst recognizing the need for married women to remain in the labour force.

The Employment of Women During the War

As in the First World War women workers were needed to fill the jobs vacated by men and to work in the munitions industries. During the previous War, however, the demand for labour was largely satisfied by single women and by the late 1930s most unmarried women were employed. By the Second World War, therefore, it was married women who formed the main reserve of labour (R.C.G. p. 22/23). Indeed in 1939 it was predicted, by the Institute of Statistics, that one-third of the 4,000,000 women who would be absorbed into industry would be married (R.C.G. p. 23).

Conscription was introduced for some categories of women in 1941 and by the end of 1943 women aged between 18 and 50 were required to register with labour exchanges and were directed to war work "if there was no compelling domestic reason to the contrary" (Davies p.95). During the course of the War two million married women were drawn into industry and Riley estimates that three-quarters of a million of these had children at school or under school age (p.54).

Although women with children under 14 were exempt from conscription the enforced mobilization of single women indirectly affected mothers since, for example, the movement of single women from Scotland and the North East to aircraft production factories in the Midlands changed the overall composition of the workforce in the areas involved. In addition to those women drawn into industry a further six million were engaged in civilian jobs in 1943 and others worked in the unpaid voluntary sector. The government was therefore forced to respond to the domestic needs of large numbers of women workers.

Schemes whereby two married women could share the same job were pioneered and nearly half of the married women workers were employed part-time. In addition school meals and milk and Local Authority restaurants were introduced and the expansion in pre-school provision was greater than in any other five year period either before or since the War (Blackstone p.62). The nursery provision was geared to the needs of working mothers and the government repeatedly emphasised that it was an aid to War production and not a social service in itself. Nevertheless, at least for the duration of the War, nurseries did respond to the needs of employed women and in some cases were open for 12 to 15 hours a day. Similarly "company rules and customs which had prevented the employment of married women were abandoned, and as the War developed and the labour shortage became more acute a

variety of special part-time shifts and other concessions were introduced to facilitate the employment of women with domestic responsibilities" (Jephcott).

Thus the Second World War had a major impact on women's employment in that it was the first time that married women entered the labour market in large numbers and the demand for married women workers made it necessary for the government and employers to respond to the domestic needs of employed mothers.

The War also necessitated the modification of strict demarcation lines between what was considered male and female work since, as in the previous War, women workers entered the traditional preserves of men. Women worked in shipbuilding, munitions and "between June 1939 and December 1943 the number of women in engineering and allied industries had risen from 411,000 to over 1,500,000 and from 18 per cent to 30 per cent of the total labour force" (Bullock p.63).

Less than one-quarter (22 per cent) of the women employed in the engineering and metal industries had previous experience of this work, while half had shifted from other employment, and 24 per cent had come straight from the home (Riley p.66). Training however was rapid and most of the work in the munitions and engineering industries was simple and repetitious. Indeed much discussion of the under-use of women's abilities took place throughout the War and concern was expressed about the under-training of women which was resulting in them being less able to replace men. Thus in 1943 the Ministry of Labour thought it necessary to issue a pamphlet, Women in Shipbuilding, which aimed at encouraging employers to recognise the potential of female labour and stated that women were frequently under-employed as unskilled assistants when they could be trained to replace skilled craftsmen. Women's employment was often endowed with a personal meaning (e.g. their labour would help protect the lives of their menfolk) and, as Riley points out, the minimal

training, low pay and practices of dilution emphasised the temporary nature of women's work, it was only for the duration of the War.

As in the 1914-18 War the immediate concern of trade unions to the influx of women workers was about the effects of cheap female labour on their male members' pay. However, although unions pursued a policy of 'rate for the job', and although Bevin acknowledged that women's pay would have to improve, equal pay was not achieved and there was widespread evasion of agreements. Thus despite an agreement, reached in 1940 in the engineering industry, to the effect that where women were employed to do the same work as men they would receive the man's rate for the job after 32 weeks "In January 1944 women in metal work and engineering earned an average £3 10s as compared with a man's wage of over £5. (Moreover) the railway companies refused to pay women the rate for the job on the grounds that they had been unable to find any other industry in which this principle was applied" (Wilson, 1977, p.137). Indeed in industry overall women's wages were only approximately half of men's in 1944 (R.C.G. p.24) and a Royal Commission on Equal Pay "reached no clear conclusions, noting merely that by and large men and women were not employed in the same jobs, and that there was little pressure from the unions for political action to bring about equal pay" (Davies p.97). The Report assumed that there existed two categories of women: single career women who pursued interesting employment in teaching, the professions and the Civil Service, and women who were primarily wives and mothers but who engaged in spasmodic, less skilled manual work. The first group of women, the Report implied, should receive equal pay while lower pay for female manual workers could be justified on the grounds that "women in manual employment did not make a contribution equal to that of men. This was because of their lesser strength,

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greater absenteeism, and 'a certain relative lack of flexibility in response to rapidly changing or abnormal situations'" (Wilson, 1980, p. 45).

Meanwhile employers used the period as an opportunity to introduce technological changes, sub-division of jobs and the imposition of unnecessary supervision on women in order to justify lower pay. The War also witnessed unions relaxing apprenticeship agreements so that women could be trained quickly.

Post-War Economy

Although the number of women in employment did decline after the Second World War the shake up was far less severe than after the previous War since it was neither economically necessary nor politically possible to allow a slump of the magnitude that followed the 1914-18 War. Keynesian economic policies, which included 'full' employment, the nationalisation of basic industries, and the welfare state, were adopted. The expansion of welfare services and education created a demand for female labour and, although manufacturing as an employer of women continued to decline in importance after the mid-1940s (Tilly and Scott p. 216), jobs in the service and white collar sectors multiplied. Moreover, while the clerical sector was expanding, largely as a result of the increased bureaucratisation of government and business organization and consumer credit, spending on consumer durables was encouraged as part of Keynesian economic policies. The resulting consumer boom provided more employment for women since it was largely their labour which was used in the expanding industries. Moreover, women themselves further stimulated demand, and ultimately jobs, since it was frequently their wages which were used to purchase the goods.

Although some women did leave employment at the end of the War many returned to the labour force after a short interval and the immediate Post-War economy witnessed a sharp increase in the employment of women in white-collar

jobs, the service industries and in particular in the state sector. Whereas, in 1951, the percentage of women employed as a percentage of all women was 35 per cent this figure had increased to 43 per cent in 1971 (R.C.G. p. 24). Indeed women have been drawn into employment at a relatively faster rate than men and employment among married women has accounted for a large part of this increase.

The number of women working grew between 1951 and 1973 by 26% while the number of male workers increased by only 1.2% over the same period. Further, in all advanced capitalist countries, it is married women who have accounted for most of the growth in female employment. In the U.K., the proportion of married women working grew from 10% in 1931, to 22% (2.7m) in 1951, to 42% (5.1m) in 1971." (R.C.G. p. 24)

Employment rates among women were higher in the Post-War period than they had been for a century (Tilly and Scott p. 214). The Second World War witnessed the first large scale entry of married women into the labour market and the growth in the number of married women working has been a striking trend in Post-War Britain. In 1911 14 per cent of all working women were married compared with 43 per cent in 1951 and 59 per cent in 1970 (Tilly and Scott p. 217). However, despite the high percentage of women working, they are not distributed evenly throughout the workforce but rather are concentrated in a few sectors. The modification of strict sexual divisions within work tasks, which was imperative during the War, was abandoned in peacetime and women retreated from the preserve of men (see Chapter 2 for current concentration of women workers). Thus, in a Post-War address to women workers, Bevan emphasised that women were not being asked to do men's jobs, and the June 1947 Ministry of Labour Gazette specified exactly where women workers were required: "in cotton, in wool and worsted, in clothing industries, hospital domestic services, laundries, in the Land Army, iron and steel, boots and shoes, and transport (Riley p. 75). Women

were frequently wanted in precisely those areas of traditionally female employment where conditions were inferior and, after their experience in the War factories, women were reluctant to return to their previous employment. For example:

A jute employer, now (1946) looking for women's labour, said that women had been 'spoiled' in wartime industry with 'Workers Playtime' and 'that sort of rubbish'. Another assured me that, if only there were more consumer goods to buy, the women 'would come tumbling back'. But a public official, whose job it is to know, said 'Don't you believe it. Women who have got out of jute won't go back to it unless their families are going hungry again and Dundee is balancing its new industries to see that won't happen. (An article in the New Statesman quoted in Riley p.7)

By contrast, in areas which had no tradition of female employment, potential women employees were not wanted and often rejected because of their marital status. Employment for men was defined as more important.

Jobs within sectors which expanded in the immediate Post-War period frequently reflect the domestic and welfare tasks performed by women in the home and they are largely labour intensive. Moreover, areas of employment within which women workers are concentrated are generally lower paid than work done by men. Thus, despite demands for 'rate for the job' both during, and since, the War women's pay has consistently remained substantially below that of men:

Women's average weekly earnings as a percentage of men's - full-time manual

1950	1955	1965	1970	1974	1975
58.7	51.7	49.0	49.9	55.5	57.4

Source: R.C.G. p.27

Women's participation in the labour force after the Second World War differed significantly from what it had been at the beginning of the century. The labour shortage created by the War made it imperative that women were drawn into production and this trend continued after the War. Thus by the late 1950s virtually

all single women worked and in 1951 20 per cent of Britain's married women were employed outside the home. Economic factors were obviously crucial in the increased employment rate in that women's labour was needed in the expanding sectors of welfare, service industries and white collar work. However, in addition to economic circumstances, women's employment is also influenced by family and demographic factors.

Women in the Family

The most significant changes which have occurred in the domestic role of women since the Second World War are the greater frequency of marriage and changes in child bearing. Since the 1930s nuptiality rates have increased dramatically while average age at marriage has declined. Thus while only 24 per cent of women aged 20 - 24 were married in 1911 the equivalent figure for 1968 is 57 per cent (Tilly and Scott p. 218). The result of more women marrying, and doing so at younger ages, is that the supply of single women is obviously diminished and the labour of married women is in greater demand. In this situation women past child bearing age tend to fill jobs first but the need for women workers can be strong enough to force employers to accommodate women with children. For example during the labour shortage of the 1950s Peak Freen introduced flexible hours and part-time shifts in an effort to recruit young mothers.

Another crucial trend is that married women have been having fewer children, younger and over a shorter period. Although in the Post-War years average family size was larger than the very low fertility rates of the 1930s this was principally the result of a decline in childlessness and a shift from one to two and three-child families, rather than to an increase in the numbers of families with over three children (Tizard p. 16). Both childlessness and large families were considered

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undesirable and the norm of a small family became firmly established in the Post-War period (Wilson, 1970, p. 50). Moreover, reduced infant mortality meant that less time was needed in child-rearing to achieve the desired number of children and during the 1950s non-reproductive sexuality within marriage became more acceptable, and indeed possible with the increased availability of contraceptives. (By the mid-1950s there were over 200 F.P.A. clinics - *Feminist Review* p. 58). Thus, women were spending more time married but less time with dependent children and many had completed their childrearing by the age of forty and were looking for employment, mostly part-time, to fill the gap left by their diminished family responsibilities.

Despite the high percentage of women who were engaged in wage labour in the Post-War years, however, the assumption remained that, for a woman, paid work is secondary to her primary role in the home. Any wage work performed by a woman must, it was assumed, be fitted in with her primary responsibilities to her household. Women themselves, employers, trade unions and government policy all adhered to the view that the home and family is a woman's priority. Thus, it was said that women only work for 'pin money' and girls continued to be manipulated into low paid 'women's work'. Indeed no secret was made of the role of education in preparing girls for their domestic role, and in 1959 the Crowther Report recommended that "the prospect of courtship and marriage should rightly influence the education of adolescent girls; their direct interest in dress, personal appearance, in problems of human relationships should be given a central place in their education" (quoted in Wilson, 1977, p. 13). Although the same Report recognized the shortage of technologists and science teachers in girls' schools any change in ideology only affected the more academically orientated girls. This is

reflected in the Newson Report (1943) which states that "More able girls had no time for education specifically related to their careers as women, but the less able do have" (quoted in Wilson, 1977, p. 83).

The 1950s witnessed a strong emphasis on re-establishing the family and encouraging the ideal of homemaking as a career to all classes of women. As Wilson has suggested, "this was a part of the general ideological enterprise which was to unite the classes and to identify the interests of the working class with the national interest" and thus preserve the sense of one nation that had developed during the War (Wilson, 1980, p. 43). This emphasis on the family is reflected in the number of government commissions and reports which related to the family (1942 Beveridge Report, 1948 Curtis Committee, 1949 Royal Commission on Population, 1951 Morton Commission on Divorce, 1956 Ingleby Commission). Moreover, the attention focused on the family implied a return to the traditional roles for women who were surrounded by images of womanhood which emphasized the satisfactions they would experience through marriage and children and the women's magazines of the period concentrated on the importance of domestic skills, femininity and child-centred mothering.

Thus, Beveridge's assumption that the Wartime phenomenon of married women working outside the home was an aberration and that "during marriage most women will not be gainfully employed" (quoted in Wilson, 1977, p. 150) was compatible with the general climate of opinion. His Report stressed the importance of the family as an economic unit and treated man and wife as a team:

In any measure of social policy in which regard is had to facts, the great majority of married women must be regarded as occupied on work which is vital though unpaid, without which their husbands could not do their paid work and without which the nation could not continue. In accord with facts the Plan for Social Security treats married women as a special insurance class of occupied persons and treats man and wife as a team. (quoted in Wilson, 1977, p. 150).

In early Post-War Britain, therefore, the family was perceived as the central unit in society and great emphasis was placed on the importance of supporting and increasing family unity and responsibility. Social work legislation stressed the concern of welfare agencies to support the family and to reinforce traditional forms of family life. The fifties were characterised by optimism, economic expansion and belief in the future. It was assumed that poverty was being eliminated and that poor families suffered as a result of their personal inadequacy. This assumption formed the basis of the ideology of the 'problem family'.

There was a new emphasis on 'prevention' which meant that help should be given to families in their own homes where it was felt that they had difficulty in caring for their children in a socially acceptable way. Before the War the social solution to the neglected or delinquent child had been his removal to an institution, but this was expensive. Home support was justified in psychological rather than economic terms. (Wilson, 1977, p. 88).

Thus, although large numbers of married women engaged in employment in the Post-War years, partly as a result of demographic changes, the period witnessed a reinforcement of traditional gender roles. The primacy of woman's role as wife and mother was stressed and wage work amongst women was considered secondary to their role in the home. The importance of the family unit was constantly emphasized and immense efforts were made to keep it together with a shift from the policy of placing children from broken or incomplete homes in institutions to encouraging them to live with their mothers.

Women as Mothers

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Population was established and, after five years deliberation, concluded that broad social reforms to aid families were necessary to prevent the population falling below replacement level. This conclusion reflected the general tide of opinion which rejected immigration as a solution to the falling birthrate since it would in effect "reduce the proportion of home-bred stock in the population" (Report of the Economics Committee p.52). The role of married women in Post-War Britain was to be that of child bearers and child rearers and thereby to promote "British traditions, manners and ideas" in the world (Report of the Economics Committee p.52). Thus the Beveridge Report states:

That attitude of the housewife to gainful employment outside the home is not and should not be the same as that of the single woman. She has other duties ... Taken as a whole the Plan for Social Security puts a premium on marriage in place of penalising it ... In the next thirty years housewives as Mothers have vital work to do in ensuring the adequate continuance of the British Race and of British Ideas in the world. (Quoted in Wilson, 1977, p.151/2)

Despite such reactionary and racist sentiments little opposition was expressed towards the emphasis on the role of women as mothers. Measures to increase the birthrate were advocated in the context of social reform, of making motherhood more attractive, and thus even women's labour organisations used concern about the low birthrate to exploit their demands for working class mothers rather than attacking the abstract promotion of maternity (Riley p.106).

The Royal Commission on Population advocated nurseries, nursery schools, play centres, laundries, washing machines on hire purchase, improved house design, a network of family holiday camps and income tax relief in order to ease the burden of the mother. The Fabians recommended universal free access to obstetric improvements, contraceptive advice and nurseries to ensure family growth. Other suggestions, contained in the literature of the mid-1940s, included official neighbourhood

baby-sitters, various domestic innovations, communal restaurants, education in family living, marriage guidance clinics etc. Beveridge recommended "holidays for housewives" since "the housewife may at times be as much in need of rehabilitation to do her job as a crash-shocked airman or injured workman" (1948, p. 264/5) and proposed a special maternity benefit which was to be 50 per cent higher than the normal unemployment or disability benefit. He also supported the introduction of children's allowances which he believed "can help to restore the birthrate both by making it possible for parents who desire more children to bring them into the world without damaging the chances of those already born, and as a signal of the national interest in children setting the tone of public opinion" (quoted in Wilson, 1977, p. 151). Thus in an attempt to promote a healthy, and expanding, labour force a variety of welfare services evolved, and the 1940s and 50s saw a proliferation of cheap mass produced pamphlets which aimed at improving standards of parental care.

Support for the continuation of wartime nurseries was offered both in terms of encouraging an increase in family size and as having a key role in educating mothers. It was argued that nursery provision would make having babies a more attractive prospect and "would hold marriages together and hence save the birthrate by taking the stress off the wife" (Riley p. 100). Also, "both conservative and social-democratic educationalists argued that nursery schools were an invaluable means of instruction for mothers, and might be utilised too for teaching 'mothercraft' to adolescent girls and a Fabian pamphlet had argued that the Ministry of Health must make more adequate plans for nurseries since there the mother would learn about 'nutrition, cleanliness, and correct physical education'" (Riley p. 99).

Neither of these considerations, however, prevented the closure of War nurseries which was justified by the Ministry of Health by insisting that nurseries were no longer demanded by mothers (Riley p. 72). In 1945 responsibility for running nurseries shifted from central government to local authorities, the Exchequer's grant to local authorities was cut by 50 per cent, and as a result nursery provision became a burden on the rates and subject to local variation. By the end of 1947 the number of Wartime nurseries had declined by almost 700 to 879 and there was a marked shift in attitudes towards nursery care. Thus women's unions began to justify nursery provision in terms of the requirements of specific industries for female labour rather than their previous emphasis on community based nurseries, and this change is demonstrated by a shift in policy by Picture Post which

radically reversed its campaigning for more and better nurseries as part of a postwar new deal 'for the ordinary family'. In 1956 it ran a feature on 'Children of Women who Work' the women were mill-workers, the children described as miserable in their factory nursery for long hours where, it said, the only glimpse of colour was provided by the oranges in the greengrocer's over the road. The mothers were emotionally destroying their children for the sake of luxuries. 'Is it really necessary in this Welfare State for a woman to go out to work, or do they do it for the ice cream and the TV?' Women who went out to work became shameful. The possibilities of shorter hours, of improvements in nurseries, were no longer mentionable. (Riley p. 78)

Attention was directed to the psychological aspects of maternal care. Concern was expressed about the long hours of wage work performed by women during the War and the effect this had had on children. Juveniles were the subject of special attention and paid work amongst mothers was blamed for delinquency. It was feared that the home was being undermined and women were urged to leave employment with the popularization of theories of maternal deprivation reminding them of the dire consequences of remaining in work. John Bowlby's work was the most popularized

of these theories and constantly stressed the importance of the mother's continuous presence for the child's wellbeing repeating phrases like "when deprived of maternal care, the child's development is almost always retarded, physically, intellectually and socially", such children "are gravely damaged for life ... Deprivation of mother love can have far-reaching effects on the mental health and personality development of human beings" (quoted in Cromer p.157).

Moreover, these dire warnings were readily absorbed and remain influential.

The wealth of articulate criticism his work received from fellow psychiatrists was drowned by the book's triumphant reception. His work was exactly what the world was waiting for ... The debate that goes on in the learned journals as to the merits or otherwise of Bowlby's work - and his many successors - is of no consequence: It cannot make inroads into the public consciousness, because that is rooted in his ideology of motherhood which is now part of our social heritage, passed on through the generations. The difficulty of attacking that ideology, as so many of Bowlby's opponents have discovered, is that the onus is on them to prove him wrong, when he himself has never been proved right. No amount of reasoned criticism, pointing out the deficiencies of his work, its simplifications and its over-statements can reduce its significance so long as his views sound right, which they will continue to do as long as the social situation exactly mirrors his dictates. (Cromer p.142/4)

Thus, theories of maternal deprivation provided a 'scientific' basis for attempts to return women to the home after the War, and provided the justification for closing nurseries as well as for the present inadequate child care provision (see Chapter 3). Indeed the Second World War provides an excellent example of the dual, and often conflicting, role of women.

Women's Employment and Family Position in Britain, During and Since, the Second World War

During the War, because of the shortage of male labour, women were encouraged to enter production and the period witnessed the first large scale employment of married women. Moreover, the demand for female labour was so

great that the state was forced to introduce welfare services, including nurseries, which eased the domestic burden of women. In addition, women performed work which had traditionally been the preserve of men although they were rarely paid the 'rate for the job'. Thus at a time when female labour was a political and economic necessity the role of women as wage labourers was encouraged.

At the end of the War, however, the emphasis returned to women's role in the family. Nurseries were closed and theories of maternal deprivation warned mothers of the long-term disastrous consequences of their employment upon their children. Social policy makers were encouraging women to return to the home and produce children in order to raise the declining birthrate. However, this policy was contradicted by the need to expand the labour force immediately and in 1947 the Economic Survey stated that "The need to increase the working population is not temporary. It is a permanent feature of our national life . . . Women now form the only large reserve of labour left and to them the Government are accordingly making a special appeal" (quoted in Wilson, 1977, p.155). Special recruiting centres, cinema slides, film trailers and shop window displays were introduced in 69 districts where there was a shortage of female labour. In 1947 there were 300,000 vacancies for women workers and the Ministry of Labour envisaged that, when production reached its height, potential employment would be three times that number (Ministry of Labour Gazette, June 1947, p.83).

Although rigid sexual divisions within the labour market were re-introduced, and although women were forced out of traditionally defined male employment at the end of the War, female labour was needed to staff the expanding clerical, service and state sectors and large numbers of women remained in wage work. Employment among married women obviously conflicted with the ideology which was returning them to the home but the contradic

assumption that wage work for a woman was secondary to her primary role in the home. It was assumed that women should only engage in employment which fits in with their domestic responsibilities and Bevan emphasised that 'he was not appealing to women with very young children (to take up wage labour) although for those who wanted to volunteer and who had children a little older, there were many places in day nurseries and creches' (quoted in Riley, p. 75). He stressed that part-time work would be available and this form of employment has increased significantly in the Post-War period providing benefits for both the state and employers since it offers the means by which increasing numbers of women can be brought into production without the necessity of providing welfare services to relieve their domestic responsibilities and, from the point of view of the employer, the indications are that the productivity of part-time workers is higher than that of full-timers (see Chapter 3).

This period then saw the development of a contradiction between the need to expand the labour force, and the need to raise the birthrate, and tangling with this were new anxieties about the emotional wellbeing of children. Women have been the battleground of this conflict within capitalist society ever since, for what has been attempted is to retain the mother as, in practice, the individual solely in charge of the day to day care of children and yet at the same time to draw married women, the last remaining pool of reserve labour, into the work force. (Wilson, 1977, p.158)

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CHAPTER 5

THE BACKGROUND OF WEST INDIAN WOMEN MIGRANTS IN BRITAIN

In order to understand the contemporary position of West Indian women in Britain it is important to consider their cultural and recent historical heritage. This Chapter therefore looks at the position of black women in West Indian, and in particular Jamaican, society. Family structure in the West Indies is considered and it is argued that this is influenced by the underdeveloped state of the islands' economies. Employment among women and the type of paid work available in the West Indies is examined. Finally I look at the effects of migration on the West Indian family structure and the implications of this for women and child care in Britain.

The Economy of the West Indies

Over half of West Indian migrants to Britain are from Jamaica (Deakin p.30) and consequently this discussion focusses on the economy of Jamaica. However, although the origins of the Jamaican economy are similar to that of other West Indian islands, in its history of extensive sugar plantations worked by black slave labour for the ultimate benefit of foreign powers (Lewis p.50), it should be noted that Jamaica has in recent years experienced a higher growth rate than many of the smaller West Indian islands:

Trinidad, Jamaica and to some extent Barbados have all shown rates of economic expansion during the last decade which are roughly in keeping with the general level of economic expansion in the world as a whole during this period and which has ... incorporated a degree of industrialization. Any economic growth registered in the smaller islands has however emanated from (a) better prices and higher production of primary products and (b) a stepped-up programme of capital and current grants to Government. Only one new industry of any consequence - tourism - has assisted these economies, and

the new secondary and manufacturing industries appearing in the larger units have by-passed the smaller ... Actually or potentially then, all these economies (St. Kitts, Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucia) ... are stagnating economies, i.e. economies in which real growth may be non-existent and in which income must decline relatively to the larger territories and to the world as a whole if general economic expansion continues. (O'Loughlin p.44/5)

Moreover, although Jamaica achieved the world's highest per capita increase in productivity between 1952 and 1963 the distribution of wealth between the island's population is radically imbalanced (Kuper p.5). Also, Jamaica's development is severely curtailed by the domination of plantation agriculture and foreign ownership. Plantations, owned by vast industrial concerns and the government, have historically occupied not only the major part of the island's land, but also the best quality land. In 1963 farms of under 25 acres represented 98 per cent of all farms in Jamaica, but covered only 37 per cent of farm acreage. In contrast, farms of over 100 acres were less than one per cent of all farms (0.54 per cent), but they occupied nearly 55 per cent of all farm acreage (Kuper p.21).

A large proportion of Jamaica's work force is still employed in agriculture but recent years have witnessed a dramatic decline in agriculture's share of the labour force. In 1943 45 per cent of the work force were engaged in the agricultural sector, by 1960 this figure had declined to 31 per cent, and in 1972 only 34 per cent of Jamaica's labour force worked in agriculture (Kuper p.21, Foner p.8). Moreover this decline is not as drastic as agriculture's decreased contribution to Jamaica's Gross Domestic Product - in 1950 agriculture contributed 32 per cent to total G.D.P., in 1972 only 9 per cent (Kuper p.17).

Traditionally many peasant farmers in Jamaica, who produce food-crops for consumption and small scale sales, also worked as wage labourers on the large sugar estates. However demand for agricultural wage workers has declined in

in recent years. One reason for this is the acquisition of rural lands by bauxite companies and the government. Since the land acquired has often been neglected or used in capital-intensive forms of production the traditional sources of extra income for the peasant farmer (agricultural labour and the leasing of land) have been reduced (Kuper p. 22). Also, increased mechanization on the large sugar estates since 1945 has reduced demand for labour and Jefferson estimates that 15,000 jobs on the estates have been lost in the post-war period (Foner p. 8). Where wage labour is available on the plantations the work is badly paid and seasonal. "The sugar estates guarantee only 100 days' work a year to registered workers, and this maximum appears to be close to the average. Most export crops have a similar, seasonal employment pattern" (Kuper p. 32). Thus, large numbers of Jamaicans do not have sufficient land and demand for wage labourers in the agricultural sector has decreased.

The decline in the availability of work within agriculture has not been matched by an equivalent expansion in other sectors of the economy and this is related to Jamaica's continued dependence on foreign investment. Many plantations are owned by foreign corporations and consequently decisions about investment are made abroad with the result that even today the major plantation crop, sugar, is refined outside of Jamaica (Foner p. 7). Similarly the more recent industries in Jamaica are also dominated by foreign ownership which "ranges from 100 per cent in bauxite-alumina ... 40 per cent of transport, communications and public utilities combined, about 60 per cent of financial services and 55 per cent of hotel capacity in the tourist industry" (Kuper p. 18). Moreover, although bauxite mining in particular has become a mainstay of the Jamaican economy, tourism has expanded rapidly, and there has been some growth in

the construction and manufacturing industries, few new jobs have been created. For example in 1967 the bauxite industry accounted for 10 per cent of G.D.P. and 47 per cent of domestic exports but "due to its capital-intensive nature and the fact that most of the bauxite was processed abroad, it employed less than 1 per cent of the labour force" (Foner p.8). Similarly the tourist industry directly employs only 12,000 workers and, although manufacturing output in Jamaica grew at an average rate of 8.4 per cent p.a. between 1950 and 1965, employment in this sector increased at an annual rate of only 4.1 per cent (Kuper p.18 and 26). Thus, despite their rapid growth Jamaica's new industries are not providing an equivalent increase in urban employment to compensate for declining employment opportunities in the agricultural sector.

The towns and cities of Jamaica do, however, provide opportunity for high, although intermittent, earnings (average urban incomes are estimated to be four times larger than in rural areas - Kuper p.18) and there has been a rapid increase in migration to urban areas. In 1943 18 per cent of the population of Jamaica lived in Kingston and its suburbs: by 1970 this figure had increased to 27 per cent (Kuper p.9). High wages are however available for a limited number of Jamaicans and it is estimated that in 1976 the unemployment rate in Jamaica was over 20 per cent (Foner p.8). Quotations recorded by Davison from Jamaican migrants returning to Kingston from Britain illustrate the human despair caused by unemployment:

"My nephew has never been able to earn a penny in his life. Here all day, no work and the girl opposite in the road with nothing to do. They will get together and have children. I do so want to be able to do something to look about helping him. If he can't get work in Jamaica at 27 what chance have I at 42? My wife want to return and sent me to see for myself, but no work." (Davison p. 502)

Thus, even if discussion is limited to Jamaica which has experienced a higher rate of economic expansion than many of the smaller West Indian islands, it is evident that employment opportunities are severely limited. The agricultural sector, which has traditionally provided employment for a major part of the Jamaican work force, has declined in recent years. The acreage of farmland overall has declined (Kuper p. 22) and opportunities for the peasant farmer to supplement his income with wage labour on the large estates has decreased. Moreover, despite the rapid growth of the bauxite industry and tourism they have not produced an equivalent increase in urban employment. The result is staggeringly high rates of unemployment and underemployment in Jamaica.

Family Structure in the West Indies

The high rate of unemployment in Jamaica, and the fact that the limited work that is available is frequently low paid and irregular, has a significant effect on the family structure of the island since it is simply impossible for many black men to financially support a wife and children. Consequently a variety of family structures exist which are "associated with different levels of occupation and income, with the ownership of land, and with the colour-class hierarchy" (Patterson p. 301). Again this discussion will concentrate on Jamaican society but as Patterson has noted, "studies of family organization elsewhere in the West Indies give a basically similar picture to the Jamaican one, although the East Indian communities constitute an exception" (p. 300).

Formal marriage in Jamaica reflects a state of economic stability and, while it is the norm of the upper and middle classes, it is not a possibility for lower class men who cannot secure a regular income. This is because marriage implies that the man can fulfill certain economic conditions. Specifically, a

man must have a house of his own and sufficient economic stability to provide financial support for a wife and children (Cumper 1958 p. 89, Clarke p. 74/5). "Both men and women typically feel that marrying without a home of one's own is unthinkable. A man must be 'master' in his own home if he is married ... Second, the emphasis on neolocal residence is accompanied by a feeling that the husband should be able to provide the main support in the family" (Blake p. 139/40). Thus in order for a man to fulfill the socially defined pre-requisites for marriage he needs a regular income "even if this does not imply relatively higher actual earnings" (Clarke p. 27). Within formal marriage the man's roles of husband and father are generally authoritarian in nature (Henriques p. 107, Blake p. 72) and it is considered derogatory for a wife to work outside the home (Clarke p. 78). "She is not merely without the need to maintain herself by wage work ... but is restrained by the mores of the community from taking wage work" (Cumper 1958 p. 92). These economic pre-requisites of marriage exclude many lower class Jamaicans from the possibility of marriage and although studies have indicated that a majority of Jamaican women want to get married, often because of the respect accorded to a wife (Henriques p. 85, Blake p. 11⁰), it is often regarded as an ideal which is not within the woman's reach" (Henriques p. 101) and alternative unions exist.

Concubinage, or common law union, tends to be more egalitarian than legal marriage and based on a shared responsibility for domestic finances. Both Henriques and Clarke agree that in this form of relationship the woman enjoys a large degree of independence and freedom. However, Henriques extends this feature to the more unstable or 'housekeeper' type, whereas Edith Clarke states that the latter implies a lower status for the woman, who is referred to by the

man as a 'housekeeper' or 'servant', who 'provides for him': who is not permitted to have her 'outside' children with her; who may not know her temporary partner's economic affairs, or even claim his exclusive sexual attention" (Fotterson p.301). In neither relationship is it the norm for the man to contribute to the care of his children once the union is broken. Black women in the West Indies are therefore often in the position of having to financially support both themselves and their children, but this responsibility is frequently shared by female relatives in the extended family. The situation where women and children live together without a man is referred to as the maternal family pattern.

The ideology of female and child financial dependence on a man is upheld within the institution of formal marriage. However, this is only attainable for the upper and middle classes and the 1943 Registrar General's report for Jamaica showed that only 33.1 per cent of all mothers were legally married (Henriques). Although the high rate of illegitimacy is frequently explained in terms of the legacy of slavery and "the effect it has had on the sexual and marital mores of the island" (Henriques p.25) I would argue that present economic conditions are more important than the past. This is indicated by Clarke's study of three Jamaican communities. In two of these communities there is little regular employment and it is only in Orange Grove, where there is a relatively high level of economic activity, that marriage is the norm. Similarly, in his study of a Jamaican sugar estate, Cumper found that in 1943 the rate of legal marriage did not rise above 40 per cent in any age group until the 60s and that the majority of the heads of such households were skilled or supervisory workers on the estate and regular labourers (Cumper 1958 p.98). As I have demonstrated in the previous section, conditions which make it impossible for men to perform the role of provider persist in present day Jamaica, and as a result many black women have to financially support themselves and their children.

Women's Employment in the West Indies

Although, as I have noted, it is considered derogatory for a wife to engage in wage work outside of the home there is no social barrier to lower class unmarried women working (Foner 1975 p. 31). Many black women do not have the financial support of a husband and a large number of children are dependent upon the wages of women. Two surveys in Kingston, Jamaica, revealed that about 40 per cent of households were headed by women and only 18 per cent of these had spouses (common-law or married partners) living with them (Kuper p.30). Thus many Jamaican women simply have to engage in wage labour to support themselves and their children since any money they may receive from the fathers of illegitimate children is unreliable and generally small (Kuper p.30). However, like men, there are limited employment opportunities available to women and the work that does exist is frequently irregular and poorly paid. Indeed, as Kuper has noted, women in Jamaica suffer a disproportionately high rate of unemployment. "In October 1972, over 22 per cent of the labour force said they were unemployed and would like to work (though they were not necessarily actively seeking jobs). However, 35 per cent of the female labour force (defined as including anyone over 14 years of age who says in the week of the survey that she is employed or is looking for work) was unemployed as opposed to only 14 per cent of the male labour force." (Kuper p.29)

Opportunities for salaried employment are particularly limited and only 10 per cent of the Jamaican women covered by Foner's census had salaried jobs. "Many women in Coco Hill, in fact, hoped that a factory would come to the village, since factory work would be salaried and relatively well-paid in comparison with the traditional female occupations" (Foner 1975 p.23). Indeed Cumper argues that

there are rigid sexual divisions within the West Indian labour market and that even where there is apparent competition (for work between men and women) a customary arrangement may draw a dividing line not at first perceptible. In Barbados, for example, both men and women engage in the small-scale trade in local produce, but the man tends to be the 'speculator', operating on a wholesale basis, while the woman tends to be the retail, or small-scale wholesale, 'huckster' (Cumper 1962 p.3). Similarly Mintz notes that Jamaican men tend to be the cultivators, although not to the exclusion of women, while marketing is largely conducted by women (p.96/7). Certainly the limited evidence which is available on women's employment in the West Indies suggests that women are concentrated in traditionally female occupations.

A principal occupation for women in Jamaica is domestic service (Clarke p.150, Mintz p.10¹¹) and nearly half of those women interviewed in Foner's study had been domestics in Jamaica (1975 p.231). Domestic service is, however, poorly paid and at the time of Clarke's study, when field workers on the sugar estate might earn 30 or 40 shillings a week, domestic servants earned as little as 3 shillings a week: the highest weekly pay for domestics was 20 shillings and opportunities for this rate of pay were severely limited (Clarke p.151/3). Moreover, in addition to being badly paid, domestic work is considered a low status occupation and Foner found that "women preferred to avoid such work in Jamaica if possible because they did not like to place themselves in a subordinate position to higher status persons" (Foner 1979 p.64). An alternative to working as a domestic in the home of another family is to engage in paid domestic work at home. Thus, in Clarke's study, washing clothes for unattached men was found to be one of the chief occupations of

self-supporting women in Sugartown (p.152). Again, however, the rate of pay is low and the work irregular. "Dressmaking or sewing as an occupation carried a higher status than any other except professional nursing or teaching, and even the village sempstress with the scantiest of skill or training and making the most precarious living, ranks relatively high in the social scale" (Clarke p.151). The work is done at home and paid for by the job but is not a lucrative trade since dressmaking is considered a necessary skill for women and with the large number of skilled seamstresses there is little demand for each other's service (Foner 1975 p.131). Thus, as Clarke notes, the earnings of dressmakers are insufficient to support the women alone much less support her children (p.152). Other occupations performed by women, and again traditionally 'women's work', are hairdressing and sales clerks (Patterson 1968 p.71).

Women are also engaged in agricultural work and it is acceptable for married women to 'help' on their husband's land. Children 'help' on family land from about the age of eight years. Employment on the sugar estates is also a major form of wage labour for women. "This is considered the lowest kind of occupation and would be regarded as *infra dig* by a married woman or by a woman living in a respectable concubinage. The two principal forms of women's work on a sugar estate are weeding young cane, which is done with a hoe, and dropping artificial manure at cane roots. Sometimes women also 'head-out' canes cut by their menfolk, which means carrying and heaping them in the intervals where they can be loaded on to carts or pan-cars" (Clarke p.153). This work is traditionally the preserve of women: "If men are found in it, they are the very young or very old or in some way handicapped" (Cumper 1958 p.103). As with all wage work on the

large estates, the work performed by women is seasonal and the demand for labour is declining because of increased mechanisation and the decline in the total acreage of agricultural land.

A form of employment which provides the woman worker with a degree of independence is higglering (i.e. buying and reselling). Higgliers buy small quantities of vegetables and fresh fruit from small-scale primary producers and resell them in villages nearby. This form of enterprise involves a very small capital investment, but turnover is usually small and the profit margin meagre. Moreover the higgler "contributes up to a third or more of her gross income to the trucker ... She frequently pays as much as 5 per cent or more interest for three days' use of capital borrowed from the butcher or shopkeeper who finances her business and the market itself may collect 5 per cent of the estimated selling value of her load in addition to other fees, in return for letting her sell" (Mintz p.100). Thus few women can support themselves and their children from higglering alone and many combine it with some other form of wage work (Clarke p.150). Married women will sometimes act as a higgler in selling the excess produce from the family land and in this way they gain some independence from their husband (Mintz p.102).

Thus employment opportunities available to women in the West Indies are extremely limited. They experience a high rate of unemployment and the work which is available is that which has traditionally been performed by women. It is generally of a low status, poorly paid and irregular. Nevertheless many women are dependent on their own wage labour in order to financially support themselves and their children. The combination of wage work and motherhood is made possible by the fact that much of the work (e.g. sewing and paid domestic work) does not

take the women away from the house for long periods, by the tradition of shared child care amongst the extended family and, to a lesser extent, by the existence of basic schools.

Child Care in the West Indies

One of the distinctive features of child rearing in Jamaica is that it is by no means an exclusive relationship between mother and child. Black mothers have not been subjected to the ideology of maternal deprivation and it is customary for child care to be shared with others. Indeed, "suckling the infant may be the only act which establishes the exclusive maternal relationship; providing for its other needs, feeding and playing with it, may be shared with, or largely taken over by, the grandmother or another relative" (Clarke p. 142). Thus, "where women work in domestic service and in shops and offices in the town, it is customary to send first born children back to 'me made in de country' who by the time she reaches middle age expects to have a second family consisting of her grandchildren to rear, and who although she grumbles about the responsibility and hard work sees this as providing social insurance for her old age" (Kitzinger p. 202). Indeed, "an overwhelming majority of women in domestic service throughout the island (Jamaica) are supporting or partially supporting, children left in the care of a mother or other relative" (Clarke p. 151). Thus, in his study of two Jamaican communities, Cumper found that a large proportion of children lived with their grandparents or grandmothers. In Caymanas, a large sugar estate, 61 per cent of the children (33/54) lived with their grandparents while in Porter's Mountain, a small rural peasant community, 26 per cent of the children (52/196) under the age of 10 resided with their grandparents or grandmothers (Cumper 1958 p. 81 & 96). If it is not possible for the mother or grandmother to care for

a young child s/he is most likely to be looked after by an aunt or an older female sibling (Clarke p.173) and if no relative is in a position to care for the child s/he may be informally adopted by a stranger since "a child may be given away, at any age, to strangers for the reason that the mother is too poor to look after him and hopes that he may have a better chance under the new arrangement" (Clarke p.175).

Children, from the age of three, may attend basic schools which provide a haphazard form of nursery schooling until children reach primary school age (which is officially six although some children are not able to secure primary school places until later). In 1970 there were over 7,000 basic schools in Jamaica, and others in Dominica, Trinidad, Tobago and Antilles (Bernard van Leer 1971 and 1972). Generally parents have to pay fees for their children to attend basic schools which are community sponsored or privately run and, it is argued, developed in response to the needs of working mothers "for places of safety for their children from an early age" (Bernard van Leer 1972 p.9). In the 1960s, however, ideas on compensatory education, which initiated in the United States, spread to the West Indies in the belief that elements of the U.S. programme could be adopted in the basic schools. During the late 1960s and early 1970s the Dutch Foundation, Bernard van Leer, intervened in an attempt to improve the skills of teachers and "educate public opinion about the particular value of childhood education" (Bernard van Leer 1972 p.17).

The role of many black women in Jamaica, as in other parts of the West Indies, is by necessity a more independent one than that of white women. Because of economic circumstances many West Indian men are unable to financially provide for their women and children and as a result black women are often forced to combine

wage work with motherhood. This is made possible by the tradition of shared child care among women rather than, as in contemporary British society, being identified as the responsibility of the mother. Indeed securing employment in the West Indies appears more problematic than arranging child care, and this situation is in contrast with that which exists in Britain. In this country there are greater employment opportunities but the extended family is more limited because of the effects of migration on the family structure.

Migration to Britain - The Effect on Family Structure

Although a large proportion (approximately 10 per cent) of the West Indian population migrated and has formed close knit communities in various parts of Britain (Fitzlerbert p.4) it must be remembered that migration is a selective process which often has a disruptive effect on existing family and community structures.

Over 60 per cent of West Indian migration to Britain occurred before the Commonwealth Immigrants Act came into effect in July 1962 and a high proportion (42 per cent) of West Indian migrants arrived in Britain between 1960 and July 1962 (Smith p.27). Moreover, prior to the disruptive effects of the 1962 legislation, the number of migrants to Britain corresponded closely with the demand for labour in this country (Teach p.37) and Carl Peach presents a powerful argument showing that "the main determinant for West Indian migration has been the demand for labour in this country" (p.92). Peach accepts that adverse conditions in the West Indies (unemployment, low wages, high population growth) and restrictions on immigration to America in 1952 are important, but argues that these factors "allow migration to take place they are not the factors that directly stimulate it" (p.3). The close association between demand for labour and migration, illustrated by Peach, is

reflected in the age structure of migrants. Young adults in search of work are over-represented among migrants and often young children remained with grandparents in the West Indies. The majority of Asian and West Indian migrants to Britain came when they were between the ages of 15 and 34 (60 per cent of migrants fall into this category - Smith p.30) and, because migration happened fairly recently, the West Indian population in Britain is concentrated within the age range 25 - 54 (Smith p.35).

Although during the early years of migration a higher proportion of West Indian men than women migrated this imbalance of the sexes was almost corrected by 1962. This situation is in contrast to that of Asian migrants where an imbalance between the sexes still remained in 1974 (Smith p.29). Deakin explains this in terms of the independent character of black women, and the tradition of leaving children in the care of others. "Very often they (West Indian women) came on their own to earn money for the support of their children who were left in the care of grand-mothers" (p.33). However, although some West Indian women did migrate independently 70 per cent of the women in Foner's sample said they migrated to join a spouse or relative (compared with 9 per cent of male respondents). Only 26 per cent of the women interviewed, compared with 73 per cent of the men, gave economic reasons for their migration (Foner 1979 p.56). As Foner argues, however, this does not necessarily imply that women are less interested in wage work, less ambitious or independent than male migrants. "Women may have had more difficulty than men in raising the rather considerable funds to pay for their passage because men received preference as the expected wage earners" (Foner p.57). Also, difficulties associated with child care are likely to inhibit the independent migration of women in that coming to Britain often involves separation from close

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relatives who have contributed significant assistance with child care. Certainly the evidence suggests that West Indian women have at times migrated in response to employment opportunities and not simply as dependents.

Cliff Fisher (1961 p.151) reports that large numbers of Jamaican women - responding to employment opportunities in personal services, dressmaking, and laundry work - emigrated to Cuba in the 1920s. It is noteworthy that the recent emigration to the U.S., made possible by the new 1965 immigration laws, appears to be dominated by enterprising females (cf. Dominguez 1973). It tends to be easier for women than men to get jobs and visas due in part to the demand for domestic labourers in North American cities. Many women in the Jamaican village I studied left their families to take jobs in the U.S., and women rather than men, often sent for their children once they were settled (Foner 1979 p.57/8).

Although some West Indian women came to join a spouse or relative in Britain the migration often involved separation from other close relatives. As mentioned, children frequently remained in the West Indies and since migration happened fairly recently, with migrants concentrated in the age range 15 to 34, West Indian families in Britain tend to be without grandparents. This disruption of the family structure has particular implications for women.

Firstly, the situation where a mother has left her child/ren in the care of relatives in the West Indies imposes both financial and emotional stress on the woman. Money is sent home for the maintenance of the children and, in addition, is often saved to pay the fares of children so they can be united with their family in this country. That migrants have to pay for such things as the education and medical attention of their children means in effect that many immigrant workers are being deprived of part of their wage - the social wage. The following example gives an indication of what this means in practice.

Mrs. Bourne works at London Transport alongside a white woman worker ... The latter has two children, one goes to the local primary school, the other to a nursery. Both are registered at the local doctor and have had treatment at the dentist. A family allowance is paid for the second and all manner of grants and allowances are possible to supplement the basics. Mrs. Bourne, on the other hand, has two sons. They live with their grandmother, in a legally enforced separation from their mother in the U.K. No nurseries, no education, no housing, no dental or medical treatment. Both Mrs. Bourne and her white fellow worker get the same wages. The grandmother in Barbados brings up the children on the funds remitted by Mrs. Bourne. The differential is sharp and brutal. (*Race Today* p. 206)

Husbands, wives and children are often kept in a state of enforced separation while they wait years for Entry Certificates, and a black unmarried mother, who applies for her child to join her in Britain, has the additional burden of having to prove that she is 'solely responsible' for her child or that 'family or other considerations make (the child's) exclusion (from the U.K.) undesirable' (Wilson p. 7). Articles in *Race Today* and *Spare Rib* give detailed accounts of the human suffering which results from delay and prolonged investigation, and Stewart Prince identified separation of mothers from children, in the process of migration, as 'one possible, more specific causative factor' in the depression experienced by many West Indian mothers in Britain.

The disruption of the extended family in the migration process also means that black women with young children in this country have a different experience of motherhood than their sisters in the West Indies. The absence of close relatives is likely to mean that the mother has greater responsibility for child care than she would have experienced at home where children are shared and where there is not the stress placed on the primacy of the mother/child relationship as in this country. The tradition of children living with grandparents and other maternal relatives, with the mother remitting the child's keep, is more problematic when the extended

family is geographically separated. Few women with young children find it possible to save the child's fare to the West Indies and the migrant mother is unable to visit the child as she could do if she was working nearby.

Moreover, the disruptive effects of migration on family and community structures may result in a lack of other social support which was experienced in rural Jamaica where:

women knew most people in the area and they socialized with others on the road, in the shops, and at markets. Most women were usually at home during the day ... if they worked, it was ordinarily in jobs at home, such as sewing, or nearby, such as cultivating house garden plots. In contrast, staying at home in London is lonely. Most have very few relatives nearby and, in any case, other Jamaicans are usually at work during the day, sleeping because they have evening jobs, or occupied with household tasks. (Foner 1975 p. 240)

The women interviewed in the study by Gorell Barnes were found to be socially alienated in a hostile and confusing culture which they had expected to be familiar since they had been taught to believe England is their 'mother country'.

Migrants frequently have to adapt to a move from a rural community to an industrial centre, and experience widespread prejudice and discrimination in a society where "whatever their shade and whatever their achievements Jamaicans in England tend to be viewed as lower class and inferior by most English people (Foner 1977 p. 131). Because support and companionship in these circumstances is less available from the extended kin, both men and women may rely to a greater extent on their partners and this is a possible causative factor for the trend for West Indians in Britain to marry with greater frequency than in the West Indies (Patterson p. 303/4).

Another factor influencing marriage patterns may be the increased employment opportunities in Britain which provide the economic security defined as a pre-requisite for marriage in the West Indies (Deakin p. 284). Also important is the influence of English norms and Foner found that "many Jamaican migrants here view common-law unions, rather than marriage, as wrong if only because English people disapprove of such non-legal unions" (Foner 1977 p. 140).

Although West Indians in Britain are tending to establish legal marital unions with greater frequency than in the West Indies, however, the evidence suggests that these marriages are more egalitarian than the patriarchal and authoritarian family structure associated with formal marriage in the West Indies. Thus, Foner found that black men in Britain are more likely, than men in Jamaica, to participate in domestic labour and that there is a tendency for West Indian couples, in this country, to spend more of their leisure time together (Foner 1977 p. 236/7). Certainly a number of studies have shown that a frequent pattern of child care amongst West Indians in Britain is that where one parent works a day shift and the other an evening or night shift, with the father taking responsibility for the child while the mother is working. Moreover, Foner argues that the more egalitarian relationship between black husbands and wives in Britain is the result of the migrant woman's greater independence and power in her relationship with her husband. This in turn stems from the absence of close kin and the improved wage earning status of the woman. Women look to their husbands for companionship and help that they would otherwise have received from kin and, because the women have more power than in the West Indies, men are more likely to accede to their wives' demands. The greater independence which black women in Britain feel, according to Foner, stems from the opportunity to earn

a regular wage, or claim social security, which makes it more possible for them to survive without male partners and "the possibility of women's leaving is perceived as a real threat by many husbands and wives" (Foner 1975 p. 236).

Certainly, as will be discussed in Chapter 7, a high proportion of West Indian women in Britain are economically active and this may stem from the fact that the job levels and earnings of black men are substantially below those of white men. As in the West Indies where black men are frequently prevented from fulfilling the role of economic provider, because of the underdeveloped state of the West Indian economy which results from the domination of plantation agriculture and a continued dependence on neo-colonial powers and international corporations, many West Indian men in Britain are prevented from financially supporting a wife and children. The combination of economic activity and motherhood is not however a new experience for West Indian women. Many black women and children in the West Indies are financially dependent on the wages of women and there is no social barrier to unmarried West Indian women engaging in wage work. However, employment opportunities for women, as for men, in the West Indies are extremely limited and the work that is available is frequently low paid and irregular. Thus while many West Indian women in Britain share with their sisters in the West Indies the experience of combining wage work and motherhood the situation in Britain differs in that opportunities for employment are greater while the disruptive effects of migration on the family mean that women are often more isolated and help with child care is more limited.

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CHAPTER 6

THE BACKGROUND OF ASIAN WOMEN MIGRANTS IN BRITAIN

The three main Asian communities in Britain are Indians, who come predominantly from the Punjab and Gujarat; Pakistanis, from Mirpur, a district of Azad Kashmir in West Pakistan, and Sylhet in East Pakistan; and those families who originated from these areas but who migrated to East Africa before coming to Britain. It is Asian families who migrated directly to Britain from India and Pakistan with whom I am mainly concerned in this Chapter.

Although Asian migrants come from different socio-economic backgrounds and differ in terms of language, customs and religion they also share similar characteristics. The majority of Asian migrants in Britain are from rural areas which have experienced a pressure on land and unemployment. Thus the Jullunder district, from where a large number of Indian migrants originate, "has the highest percentage of uneconomic land-holdings and also the highest population density in the Punjab" (Deakin p.36). Similarly, both Mirpur and Sylhet are "rocky terrains where agriculture is primitive and families either have joint farms or work for big landlords as farm workers and small peasants. There is virtually no industry and the economy is poor" (Hashmi p.3). Indeed the vast majority (80 - 90 per cent) of the population of Pakistan live in rural areas and practise a subsistence economy.

Also, despite variations in family structure, Asian families share very similar characteristics. Indeed Wilson identifies the lives of Asian women as being dominated by three main concepts - "the male ego whose nurturing, preserving and boosting is considered of vital importance; a sense of hierarchy which is considered synonymous with the existence of the family; and finally the closeness of

relationships - the bonds which provide consolation" (p.30). Certainly a sense of hierarchy is evident within Asian families and ultimate authority resides with the eldest male. The kinship system is the fundamental institution within Asian society and the individual is the centre of a complex network of rights and responsibilities within this system. Thus an Asian woman is not an individual agent acting in isolation from others but rather exists only in relation to kin. Each family member is ascribed a position within the kinship system according to age, sex and order of birth and his/her reputation depends on the fulfilment of the rights and duties inherent in this position. The Asian household is typically three-generational with property being held in common and resources being pooled. All men and women are expected to marry and a marked sexual division of labour is the norm. Asian families tend to be mutually supportive institutions so that if one member is in difficulties s/he can rely on the resources of the kinship system as a whole.

Although aspects of the background of all Asian women in Britain are similar, however, a major distinction is that of religion and at least three main religions are practised by the migrants. Four-fifths of migrants from India are Sikhs (Deakin p.35) while the remainder (mainly from Gujarat) are predominantly Hindus. Pakistan is an Islamic state and the majority of Pakistanis in Britain are Moslems. Since religion can have such an impact on behaviour and attitudes I will briefly consider the main characteristics of these three religions concentrating in particular on the implications for the lives of women.

Sikhism

Sikhism developed as a reform movement within Hinduism and opposed both the rigid caste system and the oppression of women. Free community kitchens

were established at which followers ate together regardless of caste (Taylor p.104) and, it is argued, Guru Nanak (the founder of Sikhism) "restored to women the full rights and privileges enjoyed by men. He tried to raise them from the depths of degradation to the heights of glory. He conferred on her the title of the daughter of God and he swept away the age old threadbare and derogatory terminology used to malign women" (Sidhu p.5). Certainly the direct participation of women in religious ceremonies is more significant than permitted in other religions. Women are allowed to work as priests and preachers, to lead religious congregations and to partake in singing devotional songs in the Gurudawa. Indeed Sidhu states that Sikh women are free to participate in all "religious, cultural, social, political and secular activities" (p.6). Wilson, however, argues that in practice neither the caste system nor the oppression of women have been rejected but rather that Sikh communities in India have exploited these concepts and she reports that the Sikh women she spoke to all told Wilson that within their families the rulers and disciplinarians were always men. "Older women might influence decisions but they could never make them, nor could they demand obedience. (This is in striking contrast to Gujarati, Hindu and Jain families where the women themselves can sometimes be tyrants over their daughters-in-law, sisters-in-law and even younger brothers-in-law)" (Wilson p.41). Certainly men are the undisputed heads of Sikh families and the wives of sons have a subordinate position in the joint family. However, despite this subordination of women, which is common throughout the Indian sub-continent, Sikh women are slightly less restricted than Asian women within certain other religions. As noted, women are permitted to participate in religious ceremonies and in addition Sikh women fairly frequently engage in economic activity outside the home.

Hinduism

As a result of the idea of purity, the principle of segregation of castes developed as a fundamental characteristic of Hinduism. Over 3,000 castes exist within Hindu society and these range from the divine and dignified Brahmin caste at one extreme to the untouchables or depressed classes at the other. An essential feature of the caste system is the restrictions it places on marriage although segregation has become less rigid in recent years.

Within Hindu philosophy women occupy an inferior and derogatory position:

In Hinduism ... where so much is made of celibacy and it is thought that married men cannot aspire to communion with God or lead a saintly and pure life, women were excluded from religious functions. Nanu disallowed women from listening to the Vedas although there is ample evidence that most of the songs in the Vedas were composed by women. A woman was thought to accept man as her 'Lord' and to have no personal religion or spiritual responsibility other than that of her husband. A son was welcome as one who would clear the way for his father's salvation, whereas the birth of a girl was an anathema to the parents ... Daughters were often strangled to death Woman came to be regarded as a child-bearing machine, "The shoe of man", "A whip for man's carnal desire and spiritual degradation", "A paper doll", "An idiot with the brain on the nape of its neck". This attitude still persists in some districts of India. In Ranchi for instance, a woman cannot touch a plough; if it happens, consternation prevails and the whole village has to stone for the woman's remissness. Fowls, pigeons and pigs have to be sacrificed before she can be exonerated. Kharis make the women draw the plough, eat grass and then go round the village begging alms for the tribal feast. Todas do not allow their women to use or even touch milk. Women cannot even pass a dairy, if they do, the milk is polluted. Medieval Punjabi literature is replete with the condemnation of women. (Sidhu p.4 & 5).

In the contemporary Hindu family a wife is expected to subordinate herself to her husband's family. Loyalty and respect are demanded of a Hindu wife:

There is no other god on earth for a woman than her husband. The most excellent of all the good works that she can do is to seek to please him by manifesting perfect obedience to him. Therein should lie her sole rule of life. (Abbe J.A. Dubois, Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies, 1924, quoted in Mayo p.73)

Hinduism

As a result of the idea of purity, the principle of segregation of castes developed as a fundamental characteristic of Hinduism. Over 3,000 castes exist within Hindu society and these range from the divine and dignified Brahmin caste at one extreme to the untouchables or depressed classes at the other. An essential feature of the caste system is the restrictions it places on marriage although segregation has become less rigid in recent years.

Within Hindu philosophy women occupy an inferior and derogatory position:

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... from their earliest years, the husband as an ideal is held up before our girls, in verse and story, through ceremonial and worship. When at length they get the husband, he is not a person but a principle, like loyalty, patriotism, or such other abstractions ... (Keyserling, The Book of Marriage, 1926, quoted in Mayo p.75)

Marriage is generally regarded as indissoluble and widows are expected not to remarry but rather to become the menial of all the members of her late husband's family. The role of the Hindu mother is that of transmitter of Hindu tradition and principles to her children. In short, Hindu philosophy regards women as inferior and as only existing through men.

Islam

A person who believes in Islam is a Moslem and to a Moslem there is no clear distinction between the secular and the religious. Islam covers all aspects of life from the personal to the political and rules for behaviour are laid down in the Quran.

Within Islam the direct participation of women in socio-religious activities at the Mosque is extremely limited since separate accommodation for women does not exist. "A woman cannot utter the call to prayer (Azan) or become an Imam (priest) in the Mosque. She is not allowed to lead the holy congregation in prayer" (Sidhu p.4).

According to Moslem law women may inherit land and equal rights are afforded to men and women. However, this rarely happens in practice. Where, because of default in one generation, a woman inherits land the inheritance passes to her male heir in the next generation (Dahya p.314) and, when they do inherit, daughters invariably give their share of inheritance to their brothers (Anwar p.56).

Within Moslem families the dominant and public roles are generally fulfilled by men. Authority resides with the males of the household and is allocated according to age. Thus "If the male head of the household dies, his eldest son (if he is grown up), and not his widow assumes the status of the head of the household ... If the children are not grown up, the mother is usually the head of the household but an uncle or some other relative of the family will act as spokesman of the family in relation to the outside world" (Anwar p. 54). While men are dominant in the public sphere a woman's place is defined as within the home with her responsibilities confined to the family and domestic affairs. Women are simultaneously defined as being very important within the family unit and very vulnerable in the public world outside of the household. On marriage a Moslem woman invariably goes to live with her husband's family and she is expected to be respectful and obedient to her husband and his family. A wife is often treated as an outsider, rather than a companion, and "A man looks to his brothers, kinsmen and fellow villagers for company and, when not working in the field, he sits with them in the *baithak* (men's sitting-place). A man does not spend his leisure time at home" (Dahya p. 314). Apart from visits to relatives and female friends and for religious worship a Moslem woman does not take part in social activities outside the home and contact with non-related males is not permitted. This restriction on the physical movement of women and their contacts with men, is linked to the system of *purdah* which is an important institution among Pakistani and Indian Moslems.

Purdah

Purdah, literally meaning a curtain, is a control mechanism which is defined as necessary in order to ensure acceptable behaviour between the sexes.

This is achieved by enforcing high standards of female modesty and the crucial characteristic of purdah observance is the strict limitation on interaction between men and women outside of immediate kin as specified in the Quran. Men and women are frequently physically separated to ensure visual isolation and to prevent accidental contact. Accommodation within houses is divided into men's space and women's areas and when unrelated adults are present interaction between the two is conducted via children. In the external sphere there are women's compartments on buses and trains, curtained cars, offices reserved for women etc. Women can however move out of segregated areas and yet still observe purdah by wearing the burqu. This is a cloak which covers women from head to foot with a screen for the face and tiny holes for the eyes. The burqu provides a form of portable seclusion and is related to high economic status. Other garments, associated with modesty, such as a scarf or shawl are often worn to effect less severe veiling. Thus, the system of purdah demands that women "must at all times be modest, in dress, movement, attitude and expression to avoid attracting the opposite sex" (Khan, 1976, p.226) since it is women, rather than men, who are defined as the protectors of the moral order. The segregation of the sexes usually occurs before, or at the time of, puberty.

Related to the physical segregation of the sexes within a purdah society is a rigid sexual division of labour. A woman's work is strictly defined as within the house, cleaning, cooking and serving the needs of her husband and children. A man's role, on the other hand, is that of breadwinner and his work is defined as exclusively outside the house. Where a woman observes very strict purdah her husband may be forced to do the shopping. "In some urban areas of Pakistan, this pattern is reflected in office hours, which are arranged so that male employees can do the family shopping early in the day" (Papenek, 1971, p.522)

As noted by Papanek ' There are wide variations in the physical and behavioral details of purdah observance. These relate to differences in class, income, place of residence, level of education, occupation, religious or sectarian affiliation, ascriptive group membership and individual life circumstances' (1971, p.519). Obviously the ideal purdah system requires a fairly high standard of living, in that there must be several rooms within the house and men in a position to do all the tasks outside the home, and strict seclusion of women is not a characteristic of the very poor. Amongst lower middle class families however purdah observance appears common and it may be that it functions as a symbol of status. Moslem women who are educated and 'westernised' are more liberal in their observance of purdah, as are upper class families in Pakistan (Anwar p.165).

Although purdah is an important institution amongst Moslems in Pakistan and India purdah is not simply a religious injunction and, comparative studies indicate that rather than an Islamic ideology being the prerequisite, this system of female seclusion is an integral part of social organization in a patrilineal and virilocal society. Women are both respected and feared because of their capacity to give birth and thus perpetuate the family. This capacity is feared because women have the power to defile the 'pure' blood of the family and this danger is used to justify the strict control of women (Khan, 1976b, p.106). A family's izzat (honour) depends on the behaviour of its female members and purdah is one of the most important ways of expressing and acquiring honour. Thus, "From the day a girl is born, both parents prepare their daughters to uphold the reputation of the family by strictly adhering to the norms of the society. Purdah ensures she will taint neither the honour of her natal family nor that of her affinal family" (Khan, 1976a, p.239). Moreover in a culture where male ego is considered of vital

importance and in constant need of boosting the seclusion of women is an important aspect of male control. "Women's proper behavior, as sheltered persons, becomes an important measure of the status of their protectors, and the achievement of symbolic shelter (the confinement of women within the house) is valued by the man as a measure of control over his environment" (Papanek, 1971, p.519).

Women's Employment in Pakistan

The basic principles of the purdah system obviously have a direct influence on the possible economic activity of women who adhere to the system. Purdah observance involves segregation of the sexes, with the inherent restrictions on women's mobility outside the home, and a rigid sexual division of labour. Since the majority of Pakistanis adhere, in varying degrees, to the principles of purdah it is hardly surprising that the paid working population of Pakistan is predominantly male. Three outstanding characteristics of the role of women in the labour force of Pakistan are identified by L.C. Bean in his analysis of the 1951 and 1961 Census data:

First, the proportion of women in the labor force of Pakistan is among the lowest in the world: only 14.5 per cent for all women over fifteen are classified as being economically active. Among Muslim countries, six others fall into the same low range ... while six other Muslim countries have far larger proportions of women in the labor force, ranging up to 65.3 per cent for Turkey. In the second place, Pakistan shares with other Muslim countries the characteristic that the economically active female population is made up of 'unpaid family labor' (individuals helping a family member with his work, whether they were paid or not) to a much higher degree than elsewhere. The proportion for Pakistan is 68.3 per cent, while the average for Asia as a whole is 36.6 per cent by comparison. In other words, only one third of the few economically active women in Pakistan are working at paid jobs. Third, Pakistan has an extremely high dependency ratio, because of the large number of young children, male unemployment and the low rate of female participation in the labour market. For 1961 the ratio between the labour force and the rest of the population was 1:2. (Papanek, 1971, p.526).

Despite this statistical analysis, however, which indicates an extremely low rate of economic activity amongst Pakistani women, rural women do participate in the farming economy although their role in earning family income is seldom acknowledged. Women work in the fields, care for the domestic animals, cut fodder, take meals to the men and help during the busy harvest period. When engaged in these activities women observe the code of female modesty. Usually women work in the fields in sex-segregated groups, dress is modest and interaction between the sexes is confined to close relatives. Similarly, in Bangladesh (a predominantly Moslem country), although few women work in the fields, rural women clean and husk rice, make sugar, prepare fuel and tend the kitchen garden. These tasks contribute to family income although again the women's economic contribution is rarely recognized (Jahan p.8)

In 1961 3.1 per cent of all women over the age of 12 in Pakistan were employed in non-agricultural occupations, which meant a total urban female working population of almost 600,000 (Papanek, 1971, p.521). This figure, however, is likely to have risen since the creation of Bangladesh in 1971, and the consequential departure of Bengali workers from Pakistan, because new non-agricultural work opportunities have opened up for women. Thus, women have recently been recruited to jobs in spinning mills which were previously performed largely by Bengali men, and jobs have become available to women in the fish processing industry. As Papanek suggests, women are employed in the spinning mills because it is presumed that they are less likely than men to rapidly become involved in trade-union activities, and are recruited to the low paid and unpleasant work in the fish processing industry since men have rejected these jobs as more attractive employment has become available (Papanek, 1976, p.177/8). More established

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'women's work' includes such manual jobs as building construction, low status cleaning and domestic service, and street sweeping. Such jobs involve contact with men and are considered the lowest status work. Similarly, because it involves contact with unrelated men, secretarial work is defined as a low status occupation and nursing is considered something that Moslem women should only perform for close relatives. "Consequently, many nurses have been recruited from non-Muslim backgrounds, especially from among Christians, whose own groups often have relatively low socioeconomic status and who often train and work in missionary hospitals together with foreign nuns" (Papanek, 1971, p.526).

Because of the operation of a strict sexual division of labour and the restrictions on contact between unrelated men and women within purdah society, a large female clientele for some services exists and these services must be provided by other women. Thus the principles of the purdah system have created a large demand for women doctors and teachers for other women and these professions are regarded as the two most respectable. Without women teachers and doctors a large number of women would have access to neither medical nor educational services because of the purdah restrictions and this is recognized by the government:

Quotas are set by the government for the admission of female students to the medical colleges, at ten percent of the enrolment. This quota is reflected in the final degree figures: 12.5 percent of all degrees and diplomas in medicine were obtained by women in Pakistan, according to the 1961 Census. Although not all women with medical degrees practice as doctors later on, the proportion of female doctors in Pakistan is probably higher than that in the United States (about 6 per cent). (Papanek, 1971, p.525).

Since 1947 there has been a rapid increase in the number of female-only educational institutions in Pakistan. Single sex education is defined as most crucial for the age group 11 - 16 and until recently women teachers were concentrated almost entirely at the secondary and higher levels. In the past, primary school teaching was mainly the preserve of men. Since the work was very low paid and held a low status few educated women were attracted to teaching this age group especially in view of the problems which an unattached female teacher would experience living in a village. However, the recent substantial expansion of educational facilities, including primary schools, has led to a large increase in demand for teachers and young women who have completed ten years of schooling are being trained as primary school teachers in special programmes. Wages for men with this level of education have increased and as a result fewer men are now attracted to primary school teaching which remains relatively low paid. Employment options for women, however, remain extremely limited and thus they cannot afford to be so selective.

Women's role in medicine and teaching is not a challenge to the position of male workers since the areas of employment within these professions are strictly segregated according to sex. Where competition between men and women would be possible, however, is in government service and large industry and women are effectively excluded from top positions within these occupations (see Papanek, 1971, p.524/5).

Thus employment options for women in Pakistan are very much determined by the principles of the purdah system. For a majority of women paid work is not a possibility because a woman's role is defined as within the domestic sphere.

Consequently although women do contribute to the family economy their role in earning income is not acknowledged. Urban women who work in jobs which involve contact with men lose respect for themselves and their families, while teaching and medicine are considered the most respected and suitable occupations for women. "The most frequently advanced arguments against women working outside the home were those stressing the damage to women's reputations and prestige, and a strong feeling that women's place was in the home." (Papanek, 1971, p.524).

Women's Employment in India

More women in India than in Pakistan engage in waged work but in recent years, despite the entry into the labour market of middle and upper class Indian women, there has been a dramatic overall decline in the number of women working. Between 1961 and 1971 the proportion of women in the Indian labour force declined from nearly one-third to just under one-sixth of the total and this represents a fall of 14 per cent (Lewenhak p.252). Employers have explained their reluctance to employ women in terms of the introduction of legal welfare provisions. Employers' evidence to the 1974 Indian Committee on the Status of Women stated that they did not recruit women because of maternity pay obligations and government restrictions on women's hours of work etc. However, as Lewenhak notes (p.255), the decline in the numbers of women employed began before government restrictions were introduced.

In some industries (e.g. jute and textile factories and tea plantations) technological changes have decreased demand for female labour and as factory work has declined women have increasingly moved into agriculture. Indeed the vast majority of employed women in India work in agriculture (74 per cent according to

Kapur, p.90) but agricultural skills are common and pay is consequently low. A Minimum Wage Act of 1948 is still not applied to agriculture in some states. Women not employed in agriculture, or in the decreasing number of factory jobs, find work as domestics and 'local bodies maintain lists of sweepers and drain and latrine coolies whom they take on as casual labour when wanted. These women claim that because of their sex they have little chance of permanent posts' (Lewenhak p.254).

Concurrent with this decline in manual employment has been a rise in the number of women in the medical and teaching professions and in white-collar work. This marks a major change in the position of middle and upper class Indian women since, until fairly recently it was considered derogatory for a middle or upper class educated woman, particularly if married, to work outside the home. The possibility of a middle class wife working was only considered under severe financial pressure. The recent change in attitude towards women's education and employment is noted by several writers. Nyantra Sahgal comments on the changing shift in marriage advertisements. Whereas the emphasis was concentrated almost exclusively on caste and complexion, education is now considered an important factor and men apparently prefer working wives who can contribute to the family income (in Sneelha). Similarly, Kapur notes that education increases a woman's desirability on the marriage market and that in her study a majority of husbands 'want in varying degrees or at least do not mind their wives taking up jobs or to continue to be in jobs after marriage, though mainly because of the economic gains that it entails' (p.20). Moreover Kapur found that 'within a decade the number of women who preferred to combine marriage with a job had gone up from 35 to 65 per cent. The traditional middle class idea that a woman's only

career should be her marriage was accepted by less and less of them (p.9). The women placed more emphasis on partnership and sharing within marriage and challenged the concept of a husband's absolute superiority and dominance over his wife. However, despite these shifts in attitude, and increased educational opportunities and achievement among women, the Indian husband expects the same behaviour and looking after (from a wife employed outside the home) as he would from a full-time wife, still wants to control the money earned by his wife, and insists on giving more importance to her wife's and mother's role than to her working woman's role (Satyanand p.15 in Kapur p.66). He does not expect to participate in domestic chores and the majority of working women studied had to give their earnings to their husbands or in-laws (Kapur p.66).

Jobs which do not involve contact with unrelated men are considered more respectable and, as in Pakistan, medicine and teaching are defined as high status occupations for women. Office work is still regarded with suspicion although middle class women have entered offices en masse since the 1940s. Women are severely under-represented in high ranking positions and 'according to the International Labour Review, in 1970, only 17 per cent of professional and technical workers in India were women. A mere 5 per cent of the managerial and administrative workers were female' (Kapur p.82).

Migration to Britain - The Effect on Family Structure

Women in India and Pakistan live under the tutelage of the male head of their extended family - usually their father while they are single and their husband or father-in-law on marriage. The vast majority of women in these countries are financially dependent on a male and there is no place in these societies

for an unattached woman. Similarly within the immigrant communities in Britain an unattached Asian woman who exists in her own right is considered a deviant. Asian women migrate only as dependants of a male migrant. They may be wives, brides, widowed mothers and sometimes an unmarried sister' (Desai p.8). They are not unattached single women.

Migration from India and Pakistan became numerically significant during the 1950s and reached a peak in 1954/5. During this decade the vast majority of Asian migrants were young married men who left their wives and children in the care of the extended family. Much of this migration was of a temporary rotating nature in that workers came to Britain for a few years to earn money for their family, and then they were replaced by a brother or cousin. The bulk of the migrants came from rural areas and it was usually the junior members of the family, whose labour was superfluous, who came to Britain. As with the West Indian migration, Asian migrants came when they were between the ages of 15 and 34. Although migration can be explained by a variety of factors, including colonial links, the partition of India in 1947, the construction of the Mangla Dam etc., financial opportunities in Britain seem to provide the major incentive for migration. Britain was seen as a place to improve one's standard of living and 81 of the 103 Pakistanis interviewed in Anwar's survey gave economic reasons for migration (p.25). Whatever the incentive, however, it seems clear that the decision to migrate was made by the family, rather than the individual, and it is the family who finances the journey.

Thus the initial motivation for mass migration was to earn money, a large percentage of which was remitted to families in the home country. Migration was seen as a temporary episode, and in order to maximise savings, by minimising

living expenses, migrants frequently lived in communal all-male households. Men migrated without their families but, on arrival in Britain, were invariably given practical help and moral support from kin and migrants from the same district. Contact with kin in India and Pakistan remained strong and a communication network developed through which news could be transmitted.

The initial pattern of temporary male migration began to be broken, however, when control of immigration was seen to be imminent in Britain. Fear of a ban caused immigration to increase enormously over the eighteen months before the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act became operative. This Act virtually stopped the entry into Britain of heads of new families although dependants could still come to join their families. The result was that Indian and Pakistani male migration could no longer operate on a temporary rotating basis but rather that black workers in Britain were pressurised to make the decision to remain permanently and so sent for their dependants. Thus the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act effectively transformed small-scale temporary labour migration into large-scale permanent settlement and Indian and Pakistani families began to be reunited in Britain. This trend is evidenced by the increasing proportion of women in the immigrant population. Thus whereas 69 per cent of the Indian population in Britain in 1964 was male this figure had fallen to 56 per cent in 1974 (Smith p.29). Reunion for Moslem families occurred slightly later, however, although the same trend is evident. In 1964 90 per cent of the Pakistani population in Britain was male whereas the comparable figure for 1974 is 65 per cent (Smith p.29). Moreover, as men were joined by their wives and children the all-male household gradually disappeared and family homes were established. In particular the competition for status and prestige with other settlers began

in earnest and instead of virtually camping out, migrants began to spend more on furnishing and equipping their homes' (Ballard, 1977, p.35).

In contrast to the predominance of all-male Asian households during the 1950s, therefore, the typical family today comprises husband, wife and children and this change in household structure reflects the more balanced sex ratio which now exists within the Asian community. However, there remains an imbalance in the age structure of immigrant communities in that the adult population is concentrated within the age range 25 - 54 (Smith p.35) and the three generational extended family is uncommon. This does not imply, however, a break down in the extended family but rather reflects the fact that, at present, migrant groups are largely communities without grandparents. Indeed, strong familial obligations can exist without common residence and this is evidenced by the large sums of money remitted to family members in the home country by migrants in Britain. The geographical separation of the extended family does, however, have certain implications for Asian women migrants in Britain.

Separated from their extended family many Asian women in Britain suffer very lonely and isolated lives. Women in rural parts of India and Pakistan spend much of the day outside. When collecting water and participating in agricultural activities they are likely to stop and chat with other women. Village life is gregarious and everyone knows each other. Family, friends and neighbours provide constant companionship and practical help. Since the climate is warm children can play outside and relatives are available to assist with child care. The purdah system isolates women from unrelated men but they have the support and friendship of other women and male relatives. Child care, problems, work and relaxation are shared with others and this situation is described by Satya:

In India a child is the darling of all his relatives. If he cries, it is just as likely to be one of his aunts or his grandmother who picks him up and comforts him as his own mother. He hardly knows whose baby he really is because so many people are around him, ready to give him anything he asks for. For my children there is no one who can take the place of the aunts and uncles they have left behind over there.

And over there, all the family are there to help you - and what a lot of relatives there are! If your mother's sister is not free to come and lend a hand when you need it, then your father's sister will be able to spare the time ... And people are more neighbourly too. If anything needs to be done you can usually call on a neighbour to help you. (Sharma p.116)

By contrast Indian and Pakistani women in Britain are frequently lonely, isolated and living in fear. The climate and structure of housing in this country imposes a more indoor life-style on women who are left alone and with sole responsibility for domestic chores and child care. Women in Britain are less frequently involved in the household economy since economic activity is strictly segregated from the domestic sphere. Work outside the home for women contradicts the cultural definition of the role of a wife and mother and many are prevented from engaging in wage work. In many cases women are more restricted in their movement outside the home because of the move to an alien environment and because of the increased number of unrelated men with whom they will come in contact. Pakistani women, in particular, are often totally isolated since

Unlike the Sikh and Gujarati women, a Pakistani woman does not go out alone or with women neighbours (be they Pakistanis or local) for shopping or visiting. The husband does all the shopping as he sees fit and household needs such as groceries are delivered to the door. If she goes out at all - which is very rarely - the husband accompanies her and walks a few paces ahead of her during such outings no verbal communication takes place between them. (Dahyn p.320)

Non-Moslem women in Britain may suffer less cultural restriction but, like all black women in this country, they are often isolated in the home because of fear of racist attacks. As Wilson describes, the fear these women suffer is based on a very real possibility of attack.

Thus, in contrast to the friendly communal atmosphere of village life in India and Pakistan, many Asian women in Britain feel alone and scared. The majority of Asian migrants come from a rural environment and, despite differences, share similar characteristics. The kinship system is the fundamental institution within Asian society and Indian and Pakistani women are constantly reminded of their duties towards their family and the importance of obtaining and maintaining respect for their kin. The position of women in India and Pakistan is defined as subordinate to that of men. Wives are expected to respect and obey their husbands and decisions are taken within the context of the family rather than individually. Within Asian society there is a rigid sexual division of labour with the dominant and public roles generally performed by men while women are responsible for the domestic sphere. Thus, the majority of women in India and Pakistan are not familiar with wage work although they contribute to the household income by their participation in family farming etc. Medicine and teaching are considered respectable professions for educated women and the evidence suggests that men are increasingly valuing the earning capacity of their wives. The stigma against women engaging in wage work is strongest within Moslem society and this is evident in the marked contrast in economic activity rates between Moslem and non-Moslem women in Britain. Because of the restrictions on interaction between men and women and the belief that a woman's role is within the home many Pakistani women in particular are extremely isolated since migration.

The cultural restrictions on non-Moslem women are less severe but they are often isolated because of fear of racist violence. Although the kinship system remains important, despite geographical separation, Asian women in Britain are often without the effective support and friendship of their extended family. Many Asian women in Britain thus feel isolated in a hostile society.

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CHAPTER 7

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PAID EMPLOYMENT AMONG WEST INDIAN WHITE AND ASIAN WOMEN IN BRITAIN

West Indian, White and Asian women wage workers in Britain suffer a similar experience of sexual oppression which is the result of sexual divisions within the labour market and the fact that, in addition to their role as economic producers, women perform the essential role of reproducing and maintaining labour power. Women wage workers, of all ethnic origins, are concentrated in low paid, low status and gender specific employment and the degree of occupational crowding and disparities of job levels and earnings between men and women in Britain are generally much greater than any differences between women of different racial origins. However, despite shared characteristics, West Indian, Asian and White female wage workers in Britain differ both in the proportion who are economically active and in the type of work performed. This Chapter will assess the main similarities and differences in the employment position of the three groups of women and will consider the effects of sexual and racial oppression and cultural influences.

Rates of Economic Activity

The first major difference in the employment pattern of West Indian, White and Asian women is in the proportion who are economically active. In his report of the national P.E.P. study, Smith shows that while the proportion of West Indian women who are working is substantially higher than for the general population (74 per cent of West Indian women compared with 48 per cent of women generally - p. 5) and that non-Moslem Asian women have approximately the same economic

activity rates as women generally (45 per cent compared with 43 per cent) the proportion of Moslem Asian women who are engaged in wage labour is substantially lower than the general population (17 per cent - p. 68). Although regional variations may be hidden in the P.E.F. evidence, since it was based on interviews in only six towns, other national research (1971 Census, 1977-8 National Dwelling and Housing Survey - see Philpott p. 103) confirm high economic activity rates for West Indian women and local studies report similar findings except that there is the suggestion that Asian women in London are more likely to be economically active than those living in the Midlands (Deakin p. 73). Also, the high rate of economic activity recorded among West Indian, compared with white women, remains even if analysis is confined to women known to have young children. Thus Flood et al (1976) found that 50 per cent of their sample of 101 West Indian mothers of one-year-old children were employed while only 18 per cent of their control sample of 84 non-West Indian mothers were working. Following up the West Indian sample, when the children were approximately 2½ years old, Gregory (1979) found that the percentage of mothers economically active had increased to 58 per cent, which is about three times the national average. Similarly among mothers of three-year-old children Pollack's study (1972) in London shows that 64 per cent of her sample of West Indian mothers worked compared with 37 per cent of white mothers.

In addition to experiencing different rates of economic activity, West Indian and Asian women workers are much more likely to be working over thirty hours a week than women generally. According to the General Household Survey 90 per cent of non-Moslem Asian women and 75 per cent of Moslem and West Indian working women are employed full-time compared with 60 per cent of all working women (Smith p. 67) and the 1977-8 National Dwelling and Housing Survey reports that only 20 per cent of West Indian women wage earners are employed part-time.

Similarly, in her analysis of the 1971 Census data in four local authorities, Lomas found that over two-thirds of West Indian and Asian employed mothers of pre-school children were working full-time compared to less than one-third of employed white mothers (see Table 7.1). In the most extreme example, Leicester, 85 per cent of the West Indian and Asian mothers were working and 17 per cent of this group were employed full-time compared with 32 per cent of white employed mothers.

TABLE 7.1 Employment Rates and Hours of Work for Women with Children Under 5

	<u>Employment rate (%)</u>	<u>% of employed women working more than 30 hours.</u>	
	<u>W.I./Asian women</u>	<u>W.I./Asian</u>	<u>White</u>
Bradford	44	81	24
Leicester	85	87	32
Manchester	71	75	32
Wolverhampton	41	68	25

Source: Lomas 1975

The most obvious explanation as to why women work is because of economic necessity because men do not earn sufficient to financially support the family. Thus a study of two inner London areas found that one-third of working mothers with a pre-school child said that they would like to stop working if there was more money coming into the family, and a further 31 per cent said that they would like to reduce their hours. Moreover, the desire to give up work or reduce hours was found to be strongest among women born outside the British Isles and among manual workers (unpublished analysis of 1974/5 Thomas Coram Research Unit data in Fonda and Moss p.31). Financial reasons for working were given by 72 per cent of West Indian mothers in the survey conducted by Gregory, and 22 of the 29 employed

black mothers interviewed in the L. S. D. C. study replied that they worked because they needed the money. Similarly, among Asian women, Wilson found that the women she spoke to "were almost always subsidiary wage earners; the money they brought in was essential for survival but was not the main wage of the family" (p. 43) and a report on Asian families in Southall argues that "the high rents and cost of living necessitates that most households have two bread winners" (Spare Rib p. 17). Also, the desire to purchase a house or return to India or Pakistan may be an important reason why Asian men initially encouraged their wives to work. This is indicated by the following accounts:

After a year, my wife and children came to join me at last ... Our next objective was to buy a house here so we could live independently and would not have to rely on others to give us accommodation. Therefore I suggested to Satya (his wife) that she take a job in the factory where I worked, so that we could save more money. (Sharma, p. 88)

... If we don't both work we can't save enough to do all we want to do. And if we can't live really well, what will have been the use of coming to this country in the first place? We were not so badly off in Delhi. First of all we were saving for the house and now we save in order to be able to go back to India for a visit. (Satya's account in Sharma, p. 120)

After I finally came here to join him (husband), he told me - 'I want to buy a house, you must try and find a job and make some money'. (Wilson, p. 124)

Similarly, in his study of Pakistanis in Rochdale, Anwar found that Pakistani women were motivated to earn a wage by the desire to accumulate money which would enable them to return to Pakistan for a better life and also so "that their husbands could work shorter hours and particularly avoid night shift work which made the family and social life difficult" (p. 134).

Since the wage is such an important reason why women work an analysis of the economic circumstances of West Indian, White and Asian families may help to

explain why the three groups of women experience different rates of economic activity. Before doing this, however, it is necessary to look at the structure of the households.

Asian households in Britain are on average 40 per cent larger than white households, and West Indian households have about 50 per cent more members than white. Thus, while the average household in England and Wales contains 2.4 people comparative figures for West Indian and Asian households are 4.3 and 5.1 people (Smith p. 42/4). The larger West Indian and Asian household size is largely the result of the fact that, because the minority population is concentrated in a younger age range, a higher proportion of West Indian and Asian households have children, and secondly they tend to have more children than white families. While the average number of children in white families is 1.93 the average is 2.66 for West Indian and Asian households (Smith p. 44). The reason for the difference in household size between West Indians and Asians is that Asian households contain more adult members because of the existence of extended family units. Having said this, however, the presence of extended families should not be over-emphasized and only a small minority of Asians in Britain live in this form of household since, as previously noted, migrant groups are largely communities without grandparents. Smith found that only 7 per cent of Asian households contained three generations (p. 47). A higher percentage (17 per cent) of mixed sex Asian households included members who were not vertically related (i.e. horizontally related or non-related kin) and in 1974 only 4 per cent of Asian households (predominantly Pakistani) consisted of male adults only (Smith p. 47/8). Thus among West Indians, whites and Asians in Britain the typical family comprises husband, wife and children. Only a small minority of families with dependant

explain why the three groups of women experience different rates of economic activity. Before doing this, however, it is necessary to look at the structure of the households.

Asian households in Britain are on average 10 per cent larger than white households, and West Indian households have about 50 per cent more members than white. Thus, while the average household in England and Wales contains 2.6 people comparative figures for West Indian and Asian households are 4.3 and 5.1 people (Smith p. 43/4). The larger West Indian and Asian household size is largely the result of the fact that, because the minority population is concentrated in a younger age range, a higher proportion of West Indian and Asian households have children, and secondly they tend to have more children than white families. While the average number of children in white families is 1.93 the average is 2.56 for West Indian and Asian households (Smith p. 44). The reason for the difference in household size between West Indians and Asians is that Asian households contain more adult members because of the existence of extended family units. Having said this, however, the presence of extended families should not be over-emphasized and only a small minority of Asians in Britain live in this form of household since, as previously noted, migrant groups are largely communities without grandparents. Smith found that only 7 per cent of Asian households contained three generations (p. 47). A higher percentage (17 per cent) of mixed sex Asian households included members who were not vertically related (i.e. horizontally related or non-related kin) and in 1974 only 4 per cent of Asian households (predominantly Pakistani) consisted of male adults only (Smith p. 47/P). Thus among West Indians, whites and Asians in Britain the typical family comprises husband, wife and children. Only a small minority of families with dependent

children (13 per cent of West Indian, 9 per cent of all families and 1 per cent of Asian families) are headed by a lone parent, and 90 per cent of these lone parents are women (Smith p. 49). However, although the majority of West Indians, whites and Asians share a common family structure, consisting of husband, wife and children, Smith shows that among West Indians and Asians the ratio of dependants to wage earners is higher than for whites (p. 50). This indicates that the income of West Indian and Asian wage earners is shared among a greater number of dependants, than in white families, and Smith's calculations do not take account of dependants in the home country. Moreover, as Chapter 1 describes, this situation is exacerbated by the fact that black, and particularly Pakistani, Bangladeshi and African Asian, men generally earn less than white men despite performing more shift work which normally attracts premium rates of pay. Thus, in 1974, when the median gross weekly earnings of white men was £40.20, Indian men earned £3.10, West Indians £37.10 and Pakistani/Bangladeshi and African Asians received the lowest earnings - £35.40 and £34.10. Also, at times of high unemployment, minority men suffer a disproportionately high rate of unemployment (see Chapter 1).

Although West Indian and Asian men generally receive lower wages than white men the evidence suggests that among minority groups expenditure on accommodation is greater than among whites. Thus Smith found that although the accommodation of minority groups "tends to be markedly inferior" they pay the same rent as white tenants for council property and higher rents for private accommodation. Among owner-occupiers more of the Asian and West Indian owner-occupiers are still paying for their properties, and these are paying the same for markedly inferior housing (p. 24).

Similarly two surveys in Birmingham and Lambeth showed that immigrant groups paid more rent than the general population, and the Lambeth study, together with one in Notting Hill, found that at all rent levels the quality of housing occupied by the minority groups was generally inferior to that of the whites (Deakin p. 86).

In addition to frequently paying more than whites for accommodation, many West Indian and Asian migrants have financial obligations to family members in their country of origin. In her study of Jamaicans returning to Kingston, Davison found that 75 per cent of her sample "had sent money regularly back to their families in Jamaica - to children, mothers, aunts, nephews and anyone else for whom they felt responsible" (p. 50) and whereas only 4.9 per cent of British workers, in the study by Bayliss and Coates, were providing financial assistance to other people, 19.1 per cent of the West Indian men, and 86.6 per cent of the West Indian women studied were sending money to dependants in the West Indies. "These commitments were great in some cases: 9.8 per cent were supporting one adult and three or more children, 5.7 per cent two adults and one or more children, and 5.2 per cent three children" (p. 160). Similarly amongst Asian migrants strong familial obligations remain despite geographical separation and this is evidenced by the large sums of money sent to family members in the home country by migrants in Britain. Reporting on his study in Rochdale Anwar writes:

The obligations of kinship in Pakistan extend beyond the men's wife and children, to include his parents, in some cases grandparents, siblings and even cousins, uncles and aunts. The migrant is expected to earn, save and send money back to Pakistan to support his family and to invest. The majority of Pakistanis in this study supported their joint-extended families back home and had also invested in Pakistan - bought or built houses, purchased land and in some cases started small businesses, usually power-looms or towel making industries ... Relatives invested for them and looked after the property ... The feeling that Pakistan was the homeland persisted, and kinship networks continued to be active because the migrant planned to return home permanently. (p. 88).

To briefly summarize the economic circumstances of West Indian, Asian and white families, therefore, the evidence shows that although overall the earnings of migrant men are lower than those of whites the financial commitments of West Indian and Asian men are frequently higher since West Indian and Asian families often have to pay more for inferior accommodation, the ratio of dependants to working adults is higher in West Indian and Asian households than in white, and minority families frequently have financial obligations to family members in their country of origin. This evidence would support the argument that a higher proportion of West Indian than white women are engaged in wage work because of financial necessity, in that the economic circumstances of West Indian families are less favourable than those of whites. However, Pakistani families would benefit most from a wife's wage and yet a smaller proportion of Moslem women are employed outside the home than either white, West Indian or Indian women. Similarly it is ironic that within the Pakistani community it is often the wives of professional men and successful entrepreneurs who work (Khan 1976, p. 237) rather than the wives of low-paid manual workers. If economic necessity was the only reason why women work or do not work we would expect a high proportion of Pakistani women to be engaged in wage labour, followed by West Indian and Indian women. It therefore seems necessary to explore other considerations.

Cultural Influences on Rates of Economic Activity

Asian families tend to be mutually supportive institutions and it may be that financial support from kin relaxes the pressure on women to work. Asian culture places considerable emphasis on the importance of the family and on obligations and responsibilities towards family members, while individualism is played down. Thus "if one member is in difficulties, as for instance when he is out of work, he can fall

back on the resources of the group as a whole" (Ballard, 1972, p. 20) and Anwar found that, amongst his Pakistani sample, it was common to borrow money from Biraderi¹ members if someone was buying a house or business (p. 71). Similarly, the companionship and emotional support which may exist within the extended household structure may reduce the isolation and monotony of domestic labour which is a frequently stated reason why women work. It is obviously difficult to assess the extent to which emotional and financial support from kin relaxes the pressure on women to engage in wage work but Smith did find that horizontally extended households are more common where the head speaks no English (p. 49) and, among Asians, Pakistanis are the least fluent in English (p. 55) and also the group with the lowest proportion of working wives. A more direct relationship exists, however, between the woman's ability to speak English and tendency to work.

Asian women who speak English are far more likely to go out to work than those who do not ... Moslem women are of all groups the one containing the smallest proportion of fluent English speakers ... Younger non-Moslem Asian women (aged up to 44) are just as likely to work as white women in the same age groups; and these young Asian women are also more likely to speak English. The older group (aged 45 or more) are distinctly less likely to work than white women aged 45+, probably because most of them do not speak English. (Smith p. 66/7).

This correlation between ability to speak English and tendency to engage in waged work may be linked to several factors. Firstly, as noted above, it may be that those migrants who do not speak English have closer kinship links which provide financial and emotional support and this relieves the necessity of waged work among wives. Secondly, the employment options available in Britain to a woman who does not speak English are likely to be more limited than those available to an English speaking woman. More important than these factors, however, is the likelihood that Asian women who do not speak English are less westernised and adhere more

1. "Biraderi includes all the men who can trace their relationship to a common ancestor, no matter how remote" (Anwar p. 62).

rigidly to the cultural definition of the position of women. As demonstrated in previous Chapters, the role of women and attitudes towards female economic activity vary considerably between West Indian, white and Asian society.

The role of Asian women is strictly defined as within the family and it is women who take responsibility for the domestic sphere while men are responsible for gaining the livelihood of the household. It is believed that pre-school children should be cared for by their mother or close relatives and there is criticism and disapproval of mothers of young children who work outside the home. "In most families the mother's employment is only acceptable as long as it does not prevent her fulfilling the basic household work of cooking, cleaning and child-care. Employment beyond the home can be condoned only if it does not jeopardise the affection and care of young children, nor threaten the husband's position as main wage-earner and his exemption from housework" (Khan, 1979, p.121). Moreover, the purity demanded from women means that they must be confined and protected from external influences. For single girls this often means that they are prevented from continuing their education or having a career, since exposure to education or waged work may result in unacceptable attitudes and behaviour which would jeopardise a good marriage:

As for me, my future was beginning to worry my mother. You see, because I was doing a M.Sc., I was becoming less and less marriageable. If a girl is doing a B.A., that's fine, she can get married. But if she has finished a B.A. and is at the next stage, then people think she is well on her way to getting a job and becoming like a man. People think 'how can I bring such a girl into my family as a Behu (daughter-in-law)'. So that was what was worrying my mother. (In Wilson p.125)

Married women are frequently prevented from engaging in waged work and where they are employed it is more acceptable if contact with men is minimal:

My mother started working when I was about fourteen; then it had become trendy for women to start working. Before then, no Sikh women worked at all. A few of them started working in a local factory where there were only Indian women, so the husbands thought 'well, money coming in and they are only working across the road and we know there are no men working there'. My mum worked in a bakery, there were only women working there, almost all of them Indian, and only one man - the boss. (in Wilson p.154/5).

Feelings vary with regard to women taking jobs. Girls are encouraged to 'qualify' for respectable professions - notably teaching ... (Although) few girls have been allowed to go away to residential colleges, and mixed colleges are of course regarded with greater suspicion than the few single-sex ones. Nursing is also acceptable. Office work is regarded with suspicion by some parents - on the whole, they prefer that their daughters should avoid work where there is much social contact with men. (James p.90).

The situation of Pakistani women in Britain is even more restricted than that of their Indian sisters since the purdah system is more strictly adhered to in Moslem Pakistan. As described in Chapter 6, purdah is not simply a religious injunction but rather an integral part of social organization in a patrilineal and virilocal society. Conformity to the system of purdah often results in extreme isolation for women since they are largely restricted to the house and have little contact with other women (see Wilson, Khan and Dahya). Work outside the home by women is in itself in contradiction with the principles of purdah and is strongly disapproved of by the close knit community. However, waged work at home is acceptable, and Anwar found that husbands encouraged their wives to start sewing and some brought them over from Pakistan so that they could do this work and earn extra money ... (Moreover) some women competed with each other to earn the most within the Bhraderi. The women who earned extra money gained respect in the same way as a successful Pakistani businessman" (p.134).

Since Asian women are traditionally under the authority of men, who in turn are "subject to the power of the elders (both male and female) and the authoritarian nature of the society as a whole" (Khan, 1979, p.240), the decision to work is not the woman's alone but is taken within the wider context of the family and community, both in Britain and the country of origin since the activities of migrants are reported back home (Anwar p.160). Thus, the accounts of the lives of Asian women, reported by Wilson, indicate that Asian men 'allow' their women to work, and as Sharpe argues "Educated women are usually from high caste families, who have grown less traditional through education and Western influence. Such families have thrown off some of the cultural restraints for girls and women as part of a process of becoming self-sufficient and independent from the Asian community (p.279). Similarly one possible reason why a higher proportion of Asian women in London, compared with other parts of the country, are engaged in waged work is that "there is less pressure to conform to 'the traditional' because there are few closely knit, ethnically homogeneous areas of settlement" (Khan, 1979, p.120).

Asian culture defines a woman's role as strictly within the home and waged work among women is a break with tradition. The low wages of Asian men provide an impetus for this break with custom but the differing proportions of Moslem and non-Moslem women who work cannot be understood simply in terms of economic need but must be related to the cultural position of these two groups of women and the more rigid observance of the system of purdah amongst Moslems.

In the main white childless women suffer fewer cultural constraints on employment outside the home than Asian women. As discussed in an earlier Chapter, marriage no longer excludes white women from waged work and married women form a substantial part of the total labour force. However, waged work among women

is defined as secondary to what is defined as their primary role, as wives and mothers, and often childless women are perceived as potential mothers. The role of breadwinner is seen as the principal responsibility of men, and women are expected to take the major responsibility for domestic labour. Thus women are defined as the financial dependants of men and, at times of high unemployment, it is suggested that women should relinquish their paid work in order to provide jobs for men. Waged work among mothers of young children, however, is the area which arouses the most controversy and ideological pressures often prevent such women from working. Child care is perceived as the duty of the mother and many women feel that they should stay at home full-time while their children are young although they are dissatisfied with this situation. This conflict is illustrated by a mother interviewed by Ginsberg:

I don't feel I should go to work ... It's a matter of conscience really. In one way you think, well, I could do with going out to work, not just for the money, for my mind's sake. It drives me up the wall sometimes when I'm shut in ... then again I think I've had them, they're mine and I should look after them. (p. 77).

White women who would like to work are often prevented from so doing by a sense of duty and commitment to being a full-time housewife. Moreover, the pressure on mothers not to engage in waged work is often reinforced by husbands, parents etc. Thus Ginsberg found that nearly two-thirds of the husbands in her study, of white mothers of young children, objected to their wives engaging in paid work and a similar proportion of mothers and mothers-in-law "were reported to view the possibility or actuality of their daughters working outside the home with disapproval" (p. 11). Thus, as amongst Asian women, cultural constraints often prevent white women from engaging in economic activity since mothers who would like to work do not because of a definition of motherhood which is culturally and historically specific:

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Far from being woman's 'natural' role, the allocation of the responsibility for the full-time care of preschool children to the biological mother alone is a phenomenon peculiar to twentieth century industrial society. Before the last century, mothers were involved in economic activity in the home, while during the 19th century, working class mothers were often employed in factory work, as middle-class women busied themselves with the minutiae of social etiquette, leaving child care and housework to nannies and other servants. (Ginsberg p.75).

In contrast with the situation in contemporary white society, where child care is defined largely as the exclusive responsibility of the mother, child care in the West Indies tends to be shared (see Chapter 5). Indeed, because of the tradition of informal adoptions and shared child care among the extended family, black mothers may be less reluctant than white women to leave their children in the care of others while they work. This in fact has been suggested by both FitzHerbert and Cheetham who write:

There is a West Indian tradition of fostering and informal adoptions, which attaches no stigma to a mother who lets somebody else raise her children. A desire for financial security brings with it a belief that to provide an income is a more responsible kind of motherhood than to provide personal care. (FitzHerbert p.60-1).

Some young West Indian women, although valuing the state of motherhood, may have little inclination for the everyday practical care of their children, or experience of this, since in the West Indies it may largely be left in the hands of their older female relatives: it is these women who provide the emotional warmth and stimulation which children need, while their young mothers play a more paternal role in their financial support ... Many single West Indian mothers would be most unhappy to stay at home to live on Supplementary Benefits. Not only would this leave them in a very isolated position, but it is so contrary to the pattern of life with which they are familiar that they may actually feel guilty if they are not able to earn money to buy their children extra luxuries. (Cheetham p.134/1).

Black mothers see the role of motherhood as including the provision of financial support for their children and this is related to the fact that black men have traditionally been prevented from earning sufficient to financially maintain a wife and

children. Historically West Indian women have had to work to support themselves and their children. Thus, in her survey of West Indian mothers, Hood found that the women had been brought up with the idea that women worked whenever employment was available (and) many gave the possibility of employment as their main reason for coming to this country (Hood in Tizard p.135). Similarly, Foner concluded that black women, both in Jamaica and Britain, strongly value financial independence, will respond to the opportunity of waged work (Foner, 1975, p. 231) and that the status of wage earner is perceived as higher than that of housewife (Foner, 1979, p. 113).

Waged work amongst West Indian women, including those with young children, is not a new phenomenon and the fact that there is little stigma attached to employment among black women may partially explain their high rates of economic activity. As noted earlier, if women's employment can be understood purely in terms of financial need we would expect Pakistani women to exhibit the highest employment rates. Unlike West Indian women, however, there are strong cultural restraints on Moslem women engaging in waged work. Similar, although less severe, restraints apply to Indian women. The expectation, in Britain, that mothers have a responsibility to care full-time for their young children similarly prevents many white mothers who would like to work from seeking employment. Economic need may provide the impetus for Asian women to break with tradition and engage in waged labour, and similarly force white mothers to work, although they may feel that they are falling in their responsibilities towards their children, but the different rates of economic activity cannot be understood purely in terms of financial pressures but must be related to cultural definitions of the role of women and attitudes towards female employment.

Type of Work Performed

The very limited information which is available on the position of West Indian and Asian women in the British labour market indicates that their job levels are lower than those of white women. Among working women generally 29 per cent are doing semi and unskilled manual jobs as compared to 58 per cent of Indians, 48 per cent of East African Asians and 47 per cent of West Indian women (Smith p. 77). Smith does not include separate figures for Pakistani women but, as he argues, the proportion in semi and unskilled manual work is probably higher than the other groups. Also, the evidence shows that the occupational distribution of West Indian, Asian and white working women differs. Thus, in their analysis of the 1971 Census for the West Midlands, Rex and Tomlinson found that:

Amongst women, 20.9 per cent of the general population are clerical workers and 20.15 per cent are in service industries, with engineering and allied trades third in importance at 13.7 per cent. Amongst New Commonwealth women, on the other hand, 27.1 per cent are in engineering and allied trades, 16.3 per cent in professional and technical trades, and only 12.0 per cent in the service trades. It would seem, therefore, that whereas the white woman typically becomes a secretary or a shopworker the immigrant woman works in a factory, or in a hospital, and rather less frequently in service industries. (p. 107)

Similarly, using the 1971 Census data for the whole of Britain, Mayhew and Rosewell show that "there is a slight tendency for the immigrant groups to be more concentrated in manual and factory occupations" (p. 244). Women from the West Indies are under-represented in clerical jobs as compared with white and Indian women, while being over-represented as nurses.

TABLE 7-2 Occupational Crowding Amongst Women in Great Britain - Percentages

Great Britain		India	
Clerks, cashiers	17.4	Typists	13.22
Shop assistants	8.76	Clerks, cashiers	12.20
Typists	5.72	Packers	6.66
Maids, etc.	4.91	Embroidering and sewing	6.35
Charwomen	4.45	Nurses	5.18
Nurses	4.52	Primary teachers	2.94
Primary teachers	3.62	Medical practitioners	2.94
Canteen assistants	3.29	Labourers, other	2.89
Proprietors, managers		Launderers	2.76
sales	1.58	Shop assistants	2.60
Embroidering and sewing	2.56		
Total	61.28		59.25
New Commonwealth America			
Nurses	23.07		
Maids, etc.	6.41		
Embroidering and sewing	5.92		
Typists	4.84		
Clerks	4.72		
Packers	4.25		
Machine tool operators	3.40		
Charwomen	3.32		
Hospital orderlies	2.67		
Other metal making	2.39		
Total	61.19		

Source: Mayhew and Rosewell p. 245.

The size of the Pakistani sample in the F.E.P. survey was too small for separate analysis but local studies indicate that a large number of Pakistani women are engaged in homework, out-work and in sweat shop employment where they are not in contact with men. Anwar gives a brief account of how garment manufacture has become an established form of employment for Pakistani women in Britain:

In the early days of Asian immigration to Britain 'peddling and hawking' was one of the economic activities of many Asians who were not used to industrial work. This created a contact with the manufacturers and wholesalers particularly in the ladies' and children's garment trade. By and by the immigrants

learnt about this trade and some took the initiative to start their own manufacturing and supply the wholesalers ... The trade obviously expanded when the families started arriving and women who otherwise were not allowed to go out to work in the factories were given this economic incentive of homework. This applied to daughters as well who would not go out to work in a factory (p. 126).

Jobs which involve contact with unrelated men are unacceptable for Moslem women who adhere to the principles of purdah, and are regarded with suspicion by non-Moslem Asians. Thus homework is the only employment option available for many Asian women, both because of cultural constraints and also because it is the only possibility if the woman must care for small children or aged relatives. Homework, however, is notoriously badly paid (see Chapter 3).

Also, work which involves adopting English clothing may be out of the question for many Asian women since traditional forms of dress are an integral part of the purdah system, and for women from India such an important part of Indian culture that many women do not take up a job if they are required to accept Western dress" (Uberoi p. 35). Furthermore, in addition to preference for a female working environment and ability to wear traditional dress, there may also be restrictions by caste and James argues that more conservative Sikhs consider it improper for a Jat woman to be employed by a person of another caste (p. 91). Thus, cultural constraints restrict Asian women to a limited range of jobs but in addition sexism and racism operate to further confine them to low paid and low skilled jobs. Studies of Indian women workers in Southall (Sharpe, Spere Kib No. 17) indicate that many are employed as cleaners and in the canteens and kitchens at Heathrow Airport where conditions are appalling. Others are employed in similarly undesirable conditions in local factories, laundries and cafes where the work is unskilled and does not necessitate much knowledge of English.

Similarities in the Employment Situations of West Indian, White and Asian Women

A common characteristic of the work performed by West Indian, Asian and white women workers in Britain is that they are predominantly employed in traditionally 'women's work' which is generally low skilled and poorly paid. Indeed, both Smith and Mayhew and Rosewell conclude that the difference in job levels between men and women is more striking than any difference between women of different ethnic origins. Similarly Smith found that within the job levels occupied by women there were no disparities of earnings (p. 17) between white and black women, and the study by Beyliss and Coates shows that the take home pay of the West Indian and white women interviewed was 'fairly similar' while there was a large difference between the pay of the West Indian and white men (p. 143). Commenting on the position of black women in Britain, who are both racially and sexually categorised, Smith writes:

Women seem to face less discrimination than men in the more junior jobs in which they have traditionally worked. This conclusion fits closely with the actual pattern of employment, for the gap in terms of job levels and earnings between the minorities and whites is much greater among men than among women. The explanation is probably that women are already discriminated against as women, and this tends to restrict them to more junior and less well paid jobs - they are therefore not regarded as a threat, and there is less need for employers to discriminate against them on the ground of colour as well, in order to keep them in a subordinate position ... for those who already suffer the disadvantage (in terms of earning power) of being women, there is little scope for racial disadvantage to have a further, additive effect (p. 120/21).

All women suffer sexual oppression. Women are categorised primarily as actual or potential wives and mothers, and the assumption that women are, or should be, dependent on a male breadwinner is used to justify lower pay for all women. There are rigid sexual divisions within the labour market and those jobs which are defined as 'women's work' invariably command lower rates of pay.

Women's paid employment is considered secondary to their role as domestic labourers. Child care is defined as the responsibility of the mother and many working mothers experience a feeling of guilt because they are not caring for their children full-time. Moreover, the combination of motherhood and wage work is practically demanding because of inadequate child care facilities and the expectation that women, even if paid workers, should take primary responsibility for domestic labour.

Differences in the Employment Situations of West Indian, White and Asian Women

All women waged workers are oppressed because of their gender but there are a number of factors which operate to further constrain black women workers. As noted earlier, cultural constraints restrict Asian women in their choice of employment. In addition inability to speak English, lack of information and knowledge of rights, and unfamiliarity with a wage economy may be further constraints

Asian women are worst off of all British workers. They are the bottom of the heap. They come unprepared, easy victims to unscrupulous employers. They don't know the language so their choice of jobs is limited to the worst and least skilled; they don't know their rights so they can be intimidated, they don't have much information about other, better off workers so they can be paid poverty-line wages ... Before they came to Britain, Asian women from a peasant background were agricultural workers doing as much work on the land as men did. But they did not earn a separate wage, they lived in effect in a mainly cashless society ... The idea of comparing wages did not arise because (in the small holdings of Punjab, for example) the question of wages hardly ever arose. When people from this background find themselves in the middle of an industrial set-up, it is not easy for them to adjust their values, or frames of reference, just as people from an industrial society, used to individual wages and jobs, would feel confused if suddenly thrust into a peasant society. (Wilson p. 50)

These factors restrict Asian women in their search for employment and many find work through a friend or relative which may exclude them from more desirable work obtainable through alternative channels.

However, even if Asian women were familiar with the British labour market and spoke English, racial oppression, which is also experienced by West Indian women in Britain, would still limit their choice of employment.

West Indian and Asian men and women workers tend to be concentrated in lower level jobs than the indigenous population. Indeed Cerni Pench has described how migrants acted as a replacement population in regions and employment sectors which could not attract sufficient white workers. Similarly, the main conclusion of more recent studies is that black workers are regarded as undesirable by many employers who only take on a black worker when no other labour is available (see Smith and Wright). This means that West Indian and Asian workers are mainly employed in jobs rejected by British workers

The managers I talked to told me that in the textile industry, which is declining, it is very difficult to compete if they do not run the shift system to manufacture more goods and make them economical. They have managed to maintain a supply of labour due to the availability of migrant workers. In this case Pakistanis, who willingly work on permanent night shift and other difficult shifts rejected by English workers (Anwar p.102).

The general reason for their (immigrant) employment was the extreme difficulty in obtaining labour to fill jobs that were in the main dead-end and low paid (Cohen and Jenner p.47).

Although the P.E.P. survey found that discrimination was lower for black women than men (Smith p.126) the level of discrimination revealed by correspondence testing was nevertheless high. Two letters of application, which contained the same features, except that one was signed in the name of a white British applicant and the other in the name of an immigrant, were sent for a sample of advertised jobs. Twenty-two per cent of female black applicants for junior clerical jobs, and 17 per cent for secretarial jobs, experienced discrimination at this screening stage and, as Smith points out, a higher proportion are likely to be unfairly rejected at the interview. Certainly, black women experience a higher rate of

unemployment than white women: 'According to the Census, the level of unemployment among women born in the West Indies, India or Pakistan was 9.3 per cent, compared with 5.0 per cent for all women in the workforce' (Smith p. 72).

The Dual Oppression of Black Women Waged Workers

In this Chapter I have argued that women waged workers, irrespective of ethnic origin, suffer a similar experience of gender oppression. As Chapter 2 describes, sexual divisions within the labour market confine women to low status, low paid and gender specific employment. Thus both black and white women workers are oppressed because of their sex, but in addition black women suffer the additional oppression of racial discrimination. As I have noted, recent research indicates that black workers are often only employed where no other labour is available and as a result black women are likely to be concentrated in sectors of employment which have been rejected by white women. Thus, West Indian and Asian women waged workers suffer the effects of both sexual and racial discrimination and although accounts of this dual oppression are limited (Wilson 1975, Foner 1979), an examination of the employment situation of women within the National Health Service illustrates my argument in that -

1. Compared to male employees within the National Health Service, women waged workers, of all ethnic origins, are over-represented within low paid and less prestigious work, which frequently utilizes the traditional 'feminine' characteristics - in short, they are confined to 'women's work'.
2. Black women workers are further concentrated in the least desirable sectors of the N.H.S., which cannot attract sufficient white labour, and, in addition, black women experience less chance of advancement than their white colleagues.

Black Women Waged Workers in the National Health Service

Despite the high proportion of women, in relation to men, who work in the N.H.S. female employees are concentrated at the bottom of the career structure. Thus while the surgeons and doctors are men the nurses, auxiliaries and cleaners are women. This is the result of the historical development and definition of nursing, and the structure of nursing work. Women have historically been excluded from the prestigious areas of medicine and the Nightingale system, which developed as complementary to the male preserve, was careful not to intrude into male territory. It extended to the workplace many of the traditional feminine roles of caring, cleaning, cooking etc., and features of the structure of nursing work which determine the high proportion of female employees are the low pay, the shift work (which enables nurses to share child care on a shift basis with husbands) and the opportunity for part-time employment. Moreover my research suggests that because nursing does utilize the traditional feminine traits of nurturing and caring female staff in the health service are more open to exploitation. Thus women employed in the health service whom I interviewed identified their work as socially important, and more than just a job, because it involved the young, the sick and the old.

You know they're nice people (in hospitals) and I enjoy working with people more than in a factory. In a factory it's more labour, you're not doing anything more than producing for someone, but in a hospital you're doing a good job for someone. (Mrs. Grant, Jamaican)

This attitude was expressed even by women whose work did not directly bring them into contact with the patients (e.g. cleaners) and my findings contradict the article in Race Today which argues that because black women reject the notion of nursing as a vocation, and see it in terms of a job, their presence in the health

service has injected a certain militancy which was crucial in the strike action by nurses.

The point I am arguing is that all women, black and white, have historically been discriminated against within the medical profession. I turn now to a discussion of specifically black women workers in the health service. This shows that black employees face additional discrimination because of their colour and demonstrates the exploitation of overseas trained nurses which is possible because of their status as students.

Black women have been recruited to the N.H.S. because there were not sufficient white women willing to do the work. "As far as Britain is concerned, there appears to be a continuing difficulty in attracting young people to enter and remain in the nursing profession ... In his Report for 1965, the Chief Medical Officer of the Department of Health and Social Security remarked that: 'In spite of the extensive publicity campaign started in 1965, the number of young people entering training for the Register has fallen, as was to be expected from the declining numbers in the relevant age group. This has been partly offset by the increase of candidates training for the Roll, but there has been no apparent reduction in the wastage rate for student and pupil nurses, which remains around 35% (Kendall p. 251). Thus the recruitment of immigrant women to the health service has helped alleviate the shortage of nurses. However, immigrant women are not spread evenly throughout the health service but are concentrated in the least desirable areas.

In addition to the hierarchical divisions between doctors and nurses there are divisions between the more prestigious teaching hospitals and the less prestigious non-teaching hospitals and similarly between curing nursing and caring nursing.

While men become doctors and white women nurses in the teaching hospitals and the curbing rather than the caring sectors of the health service there remains a shortage of nurses in less desirable areas, and this is where overseas nurses are concentrated. The Briggs Report identified those parts of the health service which suffer from a shortage of nurses as psychiatric, chronic, geriatric and long stay hospitals and special units, such as those providing intensive care. There is also a shortage at staff nurse level. Briggs also provides information which shows that it is precisely the non-teaching and psychiatric hospitals where overseas nurses are concentrated.

... in 1970 some sixty-two per cent of students, pupils and pupil midwives in the non-teaching hospitals of the Greater London area were born overseas (mainly in the Commonwealth), of whom about half were recruited overseas. Comparative figures for the London undergraduate and postgraduate teaching hospitals were seventeen percent and twenty per cent respectively" (471)

This supports the following statement by Gish:

A significantly smaller proportion of non-British nurses do their training in teaching rather than non-teaching hospitals. In fact official statistics for the period December, 1966, show that a British girl entering nursing has five times the chance of a non-British girl of receiving her training at a teaching hospital. (Gish, 1968).

Similarly immigrant nurses are concentrated in psychiatric nursing:

"seventy four per cent of nurses in psychiatric hospitals were born in the U.K. to a father also born in the U.K., whereas eighty three per cent of nurses in other hospitals fell into this category" (Briggs, 459). Although Briggs does not give figures on the number of overseas nurses employed in long-stay, geriatric and chronic hospitals it is likely the proportion is high because the focus is on care rather than cure.

Although I have noted that curing, rather than caring, is seen as the prestigious role of medicine, in the case of intensive care units technology has often resulted in routine monotonous machine minding rather than traditional nursing, and due to staff shortages this work is frequently done by black nurses who work through agencies rather than directly for the N.H.S. because of the greater flexibility of hours (see Race Today).

Thus although white women are discriminated against on the grounds of gender and, except for a minority, excluded from the higher echelons of the health service it appears that at least they have greater opportunity for choice, than black women, in the area they wish to train and work in the health service. However, while the concentrations of overseas nursing staff are recognized by the Briggs Report the explanation offered is not entirely convincing:

The size of this proportion may be explained on the grounds that overseas nurses are attracted to psychiatric nursing for itself or by the higher pay offered. Alternatively it could be evidence in support of the thesis that overseas nurses find it easier to get jobs in this type of hospital in view of its greater recruitment problems; overseas nurses may be more willing to go to isolated hospitals than people with roots in this country. (203)

In an article in the Observer, based on interviews with overseas nurses, Lyn Owen describes how nurses for the most appalling psychiatric hospitals are recruited abroad by misleading advertisements and 'by the offer of professional training - with a certain haze surrounding the nature of the places where it took place. Particularly confusing for people who were unfamiliar with Britain and the darker corners of its health services.' The article outlines how black and other immigrant women are misled into accepting jobs that white women do not want.

Moreover those immigrant women who are induced into the health service by the opportunity for professional training are likely to be disappointed when they find:

their training is often no use to them outside Britain and returning to their home countries often means the end of their careers as nurses. Back home the conditions often just do not exist for them to go on as nurses. In Guyana, for example, there are no mental hospitals. In Mauritius the hospital structure is self-sufficient, ensuring that vacancies will never be available. In various countries from which nurses are recruited (for example the Philippines and Singapore) the S.F.N. qualification is not recognised, a fact the British authorities are well aware of. (Spare Rib, p. 4)

The majority of nurses from overseas enter this country without nursing qualification and receive their training within the N.H.S. Since most of their training is spent working on the ward the work they do during this period is a crucial element in the staffing of hospitals. Indeed at any one time only about half of the nursing staff in the N.H.S. are qualified, a quarter are in training and the remaining quarter are auxiliaries. Moreover students and pupils comprise 2/5th of full-time nursing staff since many trained staff work part-time (Brown, p. 47).

However, while the N.H.S. benefits from the cheap labour provided by overseas nurses during training, the student and pupil nurses themselves are placed in a very insecure position. This is because they are defined by the Home Office as students despite the fact that trainee nurses are 'employed' under contract with the employing health authority, and pay National Insurance contributions. The result of their status as students is that:

If they (student nurses) cannot show 'good results' their visas may not be extended and so if they offend a superior they may well face deportation. Also while a work permit holder can settle in Britain after four years of being here on a work permit, a student nurse's years of work on the ward floor count for nothing if she wants to settle here, even though like other migrant workers and unlike students, overseas nursing students come here with a simple economic purpose. (Spare Rib, p. 7)

Once the student or pupil nurse from overseas has completed her training she has no guarantee of a job and may face deportation because she has stopped being

a student. Overseas students are therefore especially vulnerable during a period of economic cutbacks since the regulations governing immigrant trainee nurses and midwives "are subject to interpretation according to fluctuating employment states here" (Nursing Times, p.1234). This was also noted in 1976 by the Branch Secretary at the Leavesden Hospital who found:

over the past four months about twelve student nurses have not been able to get a job on qualification. This has never happened before. It has affected people from Mauritius, Malaysia, and Ceylon. We have vacancies here, but management said these people were unsuitable. I don't agree with this at all. During training they will have worked in practically every part of the hospital. (Health Services)

Similarly the Secretary of the NALGO sub-branch of Hounslow is quoted as saying:

In April last year the District Nursing Officer for that area wrote to the Joint Shop Stewards' Committee saying that in the future they would register all posts with the Department of Education and Science instead of offering them to students. The Shop Stewards protested, but in many hospitals in this area it is still happening. My feeling is that it is the cuts, what they are trying to do is not fill vacancies. The District Management Team said that their action was not based on a change in policy: it was just that the DHSS had drawn it to their attention that there were now a number of unemployed nurses in the resident labour force. (Spare Rib, p.9)

Other nursing staff in this country on work permits are also insecure, and this was made evident by a memorandum in 1976 issued by the City and East London Area Health Authority which stated:

We have been informed by the Department of Employment that the posts held by employees who are subject to work permits will be treated as vacancies when the period to which the permit relates expires ... The DoE will attempt to produce candidates for these posts, and where suitable British nationals are available for work we will be expected to employ them in place of the foreign nationals concerned. (Health Services)

Although the memorandum was withdrawn after protest and an explanation that it was the result of a misunderstanding was offered, obviously the threat is always present and the Briggs Report made it clear that the employment of immigrant labour to alleviate the shortage of nurses is not considered a satisfactory solution:

Authorities which depend too heavily upon recruits from overseas could find themselves in great difficulties because of fluctuations within the international labour market ... the general situation from the patient's point of view is far from satisfactory - over-reliance on trainee labour; over dependence on agency nurses and midwives; and too heavy a concentration of overseas nurses and midwives. (437/473)

The promise of a worthwhile career in the N.H.S. is contradicted by reality, and even if the overseas nurse is not deported and is employed:

The chance of advancement for nurses born outside the British Isles seem to be slender. The findings of a survey of senior nursing staff (Report of the Committee on Senior Nursing Staff Structures, HMSO, 1966) indicated that ... even though at least 25% of all nursing staff in Britain are born elsewhere, less than 5% have so far been able to reach the jobs making up the upper fifth of the profession. (Glah)

What I have argued, therefore, is that although all women face discrimination within the health service black, and other immigrant women, suffer further discrimination in terms of being concentrated in the less desirable sectors of the N.H.S. and having less chance of advancement than white British employees. Furthermore, overseas student and pupil nurses, and nurses on work vouchers, are easily expelled from the labour force, indeed the country, when their labour is no longer required. They would then return 'home' with skills often irrelevant to the health service available in their country of origin.

Comparative Analysis of Paid Employment Among West Indian, White and Asian Women in Britain.

This Chapter has considered both the similarities and differences in the employment situations of West Indian, White and Asian women in Britain. Women waged workers, irrespective of ethnic origin, are concentrated in low paid, low status and gender specific employment. This is the result of rigid sexual divisions within the labour market and Chapter 9, in assessing the availability of employment within the survey area, reveals a similar situation to that which exists nationally, in that both applicants for jobs and employers recognize and accept that some jobs are 'women's work' while others are not. Thus, in the context of a sexually divided labour market, a worker's gender, rather than race, is the significant factor and all women are similarly restricted in their employment options. In addition to their role as wage labourers, moreover, women are universally expected to perform the essential role of reproducing and maintaining labour power and women of all ethnic origins are primarily defined as wives and mothers. Child care is deemed the responsibility of mothers who are thus further restricted in their employment by the practical constraints of child care.

Despite these similarities, however, variations in the employment situations of West Indian, Asian and white women are also evident. As this Chapter has revealed, the economic activity rates of the three groups of women vary significantly, as does the type of work they perform. The employment situation of black women within the National Health Service illustrates the dual oppression they suffer as both women and blacks and indicates that racial discrimination results in black women being employed in

categories of work which do not attract sufficient white labour. Recent studies suggest that this reflects the situation within the labour market as a whole. Racial discrimination, however, does not explain variations in economic activity rates and I argue that the diverse cultural backgrounds of West Indian, white and Asian women, described in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 cannot be ignored.

Women's waged work cannot be divorced from their role within the family (see Chapter 1) and my empirical research is concerned with how women experience their conflicting roles as both economic producers and domestic labourers. In order to assess variations in the employment situations of women of different ethnic backgrounds it is necessary to understand the differing cultural definitions of the role of women and their position within the family. Thus my research considers the significance of cultural differences, particularly in the interpretation of gender roles and the ideology of parentcraft and child care, on a woman's employment position.

However, whilst recognizing that variations in the employment situations of women of different ethnic origins exist, and arguing that their diverse cultural and historical backgrounds contribute to these differences, it is noted that differences in the employment positions of men and women in Britain are generally greater than disparities between women of different racial origins. The significance of sexual divisions within the labour market and, more specifically, the constraints on the employment options of mothers of pre-school children because of inadequate child care provision must, therefore, also be investigated.

My research, described in Part 3 of this thesis, considers the employment opportunities and child care provision which exist within the survey area, women's own interpretation of gender roles and parenthood, reasons for and experience of waged work and child care, and assesses the extent to which objective reasons for their subordinate position in the labour market are viewed as constraints by the women themselves.

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CHAPTER 8

BACKGROUND OF SAMPLE

Methodology¹

The data described in Part 3 of this thesis is the outcome of empirical research I undertook in the Handsworth area of Birmingham during 1978 and 1979. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 31 West Indian, 22 Asian and 16 white mothers living in the survey area². These women were selected from a larger quota sample of 395 West Indian, 305 Asian and 400 white residents who were interviewed by National Opinion Poll interviewers between May and June 1976 for Rex and Tomlinson's study, Colonial Immigrants in a British City (1979). In 1976 these respondents, of whom 200 were residents of council properties, were asked questions relating to their education, employment, children, housing and their likes and dislikes of the area. The advantage of employing a sub-sample of this sample was therefore that certain information about the household was already available but this method posed the disadvantage that a member of the family had been interviewed only two or three years prior to my visit. The problem of over-interviewing was, however, lessened by the fact that in the Rex and Tomlinson survey it was the 'head of household', who in the majority of cases was male, that was interviewed. My research was concerned with the women.

From the 1100 respondents interviewed in the Rex and Tomlinson survey an eventual sample of about 25 women in each racial category was wanted. Since the research was concerned with mothers with pre-school children the first stage in the selection process was to eliminate women over the age when they are likely to

1. A detailed account of the research process is provided in the Appendix.

2. See Chapter 9 for an analysis of the survey area.

have young children. A computer print-out of households where the female 'head' or spouse was under 45 years of age in 1976 was obtained and thus, unfortunately, pre-school children who were living in the household although not the children of the female head of household or female spouse may have been eliminated. Two hundred and thirty seven West Indian, 209 Asian and 102 white women fell into the under 45 category.

The 1976 questionnaires relating to these West Indian and white women were then analysed and women with children aged three and under in 1976 were selected. This produced a sample of 48 West Indian and 27 white women and there was an obvious bias towards mothers of older children, since only where selected women had had children since 1976 were children under two years of age included. Indeed, by the time of the interviews it was found that some of the children were attending school but it was decided to include the mothers of these children since it was only recently that the children had started school and the questions were still appropriate. The same procedure as that used for the West Indian and white women, was employed with the Asian mothers aged under 45 although, because these interviews did not take place until 1979, only mothers with children two years old and under were selected. This produced a sample of 81 from which one in three was randomly selected and thus an Asian sample of 27 was obtained.

The West Indian and white women, who had been selected because of having young children, were approached directly between July and November 1978 and the Asian sample contacted during September and October 1979. Consideration was given to the possibility of initial contact by letter but this was rejected because of the time and expense involved and the anticipated low rate of response to this communication. Instead the women were approached, without warning, and the majority agreed to participate in the survey at the time of the initial contact.

Of the 48 West Indian women contacted only one refused to participate and a refusal was anticipated in view of comments recorded in 1976 about reluctance to be interviewed. The respondent simply explained that she was too busy. Thirteen of the initial contacts had moved and were neither replaced nor traced. In one case the respondent was interviewed but it was subsequently discovered that the tape recorder had not functioned, and four of the women who were classified as West Indian in 1976, because the head of household was black, were in fact white. Thus a sample of 29 remained and in addition two daughters of a respondent were interviewed, making a total of 31.

Three of the initial white contacts refused to be interviewed. Two of these women said they did not have time and one seemed very reluctant when first approached, explaining that she had become separated from her husband and remembered that the 1976 survey asked "personal" questions. Although this respondent did arrange a future appointment she did not answer the door when I subsequently called on several occasions. Thirteen of the white households had moved and were not traced. However, as mentioned, four women initially classified as West Indian were white and a friend of one respondent was also interviewed. Thus a total of 16 white women were included in the survey.

Of the 27 Asian women contacted one refused and six households had moved. However in two cases the sister-in-law of the initial respondent was also interviewed. In one contact, because of a misunderstanding, an unmarried Indian woman was interviewed and she is included in the sample of 22.

Thus the eventual sample comprised 31 West Indian, 16 white and 22 Asian respondents and included both wage working and non-wage working mothers.

Where possible the respondents were interviewed alone, or only with their young children present, since it was felt that the presence of others would influence responses. However in the case of 15 of the 22 Asian interviews the presence of an interpreter was essential¹. All interviews were conducted in the home of the respondent and the length of the interview varied from about one hour to five hours. The interview schedule was divided into two parts and initially only one part was completed during the first visit but later the respondents were given the option of whether or not to go on after completion of the first part and they invariably chose to continue. The variations in the time taken to complete the interview reflect its semi-structured nature in that many of the questions provided the opportunity for the respondent to talk at length. Also, it was found that interviews conducted alone with the respondent tended to be longer than where the interpreter was used or where others were present. The interviews were recorded on tape and, with the exception of one respondent who refused to be taped, there was very little reluctance or concern expressed about the use of the tape recorder. Where reluctance was expressed it was in terms of the woman not liking the sound of her voice or, when talking about specific issues, especially abortion, homework and relatives, questioning who would hear the tapes. Respondents frequently mentioned, at the end of the interview, that only a short time had elapsed before they had forgotten about the tape recorder and although many went on to talk at length once it had been switched off this may have been more a consequence of the interview ending rather than inhibition about being recorded. Off tape the most common areas of conversation were religion, men, housing, children, depression

1. The use of an interpreter and presence of others during the interview is discussed in more detail in the Appendix.

and, among Asian women in particular, loneliness and problems of living with in-laws. The taped interviews were subsequently transcribed.

The research is thus based on the comments received from 70 women in response to a semi-structured taped interview. I move on now to consider the characteristics of these respondents.

Characteristics of Respondents

As can be seen from the table below, the majority of the white women were born in Britain, the majority of West Indians in Jamaica and Sikhs from India were predominant in the Asian sample. Only one black respondent was born in Britain.

TABLE 8:1

Country of Birth of Respondents

<u>White</u>	No.	%	<u>West Indian</u>	No.	%	<u>Asian</u>	No.	%
Britain	13	81	Jamaica	26	84	India	16	73 ¹
Northern Ireland	2	12	Barbados	2	6	Pakistan	5	23 ²
Australia	1	6	Neols	1	3	Britain	1	4 ³
			St. Kitt	1	3			
			St. Vincent	1	3			

Notes:

1. 10 Sikh, 4 Hindu, 1 Moslem, 1 Church of England.
2. All Moslem
3. Hindu

The predominance of Indian born Asians conforms with the figures for the four wards as a whole which show that 30 per cent of the residents in the wards were born in India while the corresponding percentage for Pakistan was 7 per cent (1971 Census). Similarly in their sample of Asian respondents Rex and Tomlinson found that Sikhism predominated (Sikh 41%, Hindu 32%, Moslem 19% - p. 86).

As mentioned earlier women over 45 years of age in 1976 were excluded from the survey and the majority of respondents were aged between 24 and 35 at the time of the interview:

TABLE 8:2

Age of Respondents (At Time of Interview)

	<u>White</u>	<u>West Indian</u>	<u>Asian</u>
<u>Range</u>	18 - 38	18 - 44	19 - 39
<u>Average</u>	29	32	27
18 - 23	3 (19%)	3 (10%)	5 (23%)
24 - 29	3 (19%)	10 (32%)	11 (50%)
30 - 35	7 (44%)	5 (16%)	3 (14%)
36 - 41	3 (19%)	9 (29%)	3 (14%)
42+	0	4 (13%)	0

In terms of marital status there were significant differences between the three racial groups. Among the Asian sample all the respondents were married, with the exception of the single childless woman who was included because of a misunderstanding. Only slightly over half of the West Indian women were married, while just over a quarter were single and living alone. Sixty-two per cent of the white respondents were married (See Table 8:3)

Thus, despite variations, the most common household structure¹ in each racial group was that of husband, wife and children. As Table 8:4 demonstrates over half of all respondents lived only with their husband and child/ren. However, while the remainder of Asian respondents lived in households which included other family members the most common alternative family structure for the West Indian and white respondents was that of mother and child/ren alone, or mother, child/ren and boyfriend.

1. 'Household structure' refers to people living together as a family unit as distinct from people simply sharing the same dwelling.

TABLE 8:3

Marital Status of Respondents

	<u>White</u>	<u>West Indian</u>	<u>Asian</u>
Married	10 (62%)	17 (55%)	21 (95%)
Single Alone	2 (12%)	8 (26%)	1 (5%) ¹
Single Cohabiting	2 (12%)	3 (10%)	0
Divorced	1 (6%)	2 (6%)	0
Separated	1 (6%)	1 (3%)	0

Note:

1. Single women without children.

TABLE 8:4

Household Structure of Respondents

	<u>White</u>	<u>West Indian</u>	<u>Asian</u>
Respondent and child/ren	2 (12%)	8 (26%)	0
Respondent, husband and child/ren	10 (62%)	16 (52%)	13 (59%)
Respondent, husband, child/ren, grandchild/ren	0	3 (10%)	0
Respondent, boyfriend and child/ren	3 (19%)	3 (10%)	0
Respondent, boyfriend, child/ren and other	0	2 (6%)	0
Respondent, husband, child/ren and parent(s)-in-law	0	0	4 (18%)
Respondent, husband, child/ren, parents-in-law brothers and sister-in-law, niece and nephew	0	0	1 (4%)
Respondent, husband, children, brother and sister- in-law, niece/nephew	0	0	2 (9%)
Respondent, husband, child/ren and respondent's parents	0	0	1 (4%)
Respondent, child, female friend and child	1 (6%)	0	0
Respondent, parents, siblings, sister-in-law, niece/nephew	0	0	1 (4%)

Moreover while the average number of children living with the white respondents was 2.6 the corresponding figures for the West Indian and Asian respondents was 3.4 and 3.3. Table 8:5 shows how many children were living with the respondents:

TABLE 8:5

Children Living With Respondents

<u>Number of children</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>West Indian</u>	<u>Asian</u>
8	0	1	0
7	0	1	0
6	1	4	1
5	0	1	2
4	2	6	7
3	5	7	5
2	5	5	5
1	3	6	1

The children of the Asian respondents were generally younger than those of the West Indian and white women interviewed. Thus, for example, seven Asian respondents had a child under one-year-old while only one white and three West Indian respondents were in this position (Table 8:6). This discrepancy, however, is not simply a product of sampling techniques since although the sample included mothers of Asian children one year younger, at the time of sampling, than the West Indian and white children, the interviews with the Asian women were conducted one year later than with the other mothers.

TABLE 8:6

Youngest Child Living with Respondent

<u>Age of youngest child</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>West Indian</u>	<u>Asian</u>
6	1	6	1
5	1	9	2
4	4	4	1
3	2	4	1
2	4	3	4
1	3	2	5
less than 1	1	3	7

Moreover, a larger proportion of Asian respondents (68%) had two or more children aged five and under compared with the West Indian (16%) and white women (44%) interviewed.

In the vast majority of cases the number of children living with the respondent represents the mother's total number of children. Only seven of the respondents had children who were not living at home, at the time of the interview, and six of these are adult offspring who were living independently. One respondent had a young child who was living with her grandmother in Britain but none of the respondents had young children still in Asia or the West Indies. This finding corresponds with the research of Rex and Tomlinson who found that among the 700 households interviewed in their survey there were only 62 children (18 in the West Indies and 44 in Asia) still wanting to come to Britain (p. 79).

This situation contrasts with the childhood of many of the respondents which was spent separated from one or both parents. As will be shown, a majority (55%) of the West Indian respondents spent a large part of their childhood separated

from their biological mother and one third (7/22) of the Asian respondents had been separated from their father because of his migration. The fact that, with the exception of one respondent, all the women interviewed now have all their young children living with them possibly reflects their pattern of migration in that the majority of respondents were childless when they came to Britain. The majority of West Indian (67%) and Asian (71%) respondents were under the age of 20, and single, when they migrated. Sixty per cent of the West Indian respondents migrated either with their parent(s) or to join one or both parents, while only 20 per cent came with, or to join, a husband. Similarly 47 per cent of Asian respondents came to join a parent or parents although the migration of 48 per cent was connected with marriage (i.e. with husband, to join husband, or to marry). The three white respondents who were born outside Britain migrated at the age of 22 or 23, came to Britain alone and were in search of better job prospects or wanting to establish independence from family.

TABLE 8:7

Age of Respondent at Migration

	<u>White</u>	<u>West Indian</u>	<u>Asian</u> ¹
5 - 9	-	2 (6%)	1 (5%)
10 - 14	-	8 (26%)	6 (28%)
15 - 19	-	11 (35%)	8 (38%)
20 - 24	3 (100%)	7 (23%)	5 (24%)
25 +	-	3 (10%)	1 (5%)

Note:

1. One Asian respondent born in Britain

TABLE 8:8

Pattern of Migration of Respondents

	<u>White</u>	<u>West Indian</u>	<u>Asian</u>
Alone	3 (100%)	3 (10%)	-
Alone to join mother	-	5 (16%)	-
Alone to join father	-	1 (3%)	-
Alone to join parents	-	11 (35%)	3 (14%)
Alone to join boyfriend	-	1 (3%)	-
Alone to join husband	-	3 (10%)	5 (24%)
Alone to join other	-	1 (3%)	-
With mother to join father	-	-	7 (33%)
To marry	-	-	3 (14%)
With husband	-	3 (10%)	3 (14%)
With parents	-	1 (3%)	-
With mother	-	1 (3%)	-
D/K	-	1 (3%)	-

The migration of the respondents had occurred between 1955 and 1976 with the West Indian respondents arriving in Britain earlier than the Asian women. Thus, 97 per cent of the West Indian women interviewed migrated before 1969 while the first Asian respondent arrived in 1961 and 28.5 per cent came after 1968:

TABLE 8:9

Date of Migration of Respondents

	<u>West Indian</u>	<u>Asian</u>
1955 - 1959	6 (19%)	-
1960 - 1964	13 (42%)	4 (19%)
1965 - 1969	11 (35%)	13 (62%)
1970 - 1974	1 (3%)	2 (9%)
1975 - 1979	-	2 (9%)

This pattern of migration corresponds with that for the area as a whole in that until 1961 West Indians were the main group of immigrants in the four wards while in 1971 West Indians and Asians were present in almost equal numbers (1961 and 1971 Census). Similarly Rex and Tomlinson found that 83 per cent of their West Indian respondents had come to Britain between 1954 and 1962 while 62.25 per cent of their Asian respondents had arrived between 1960 and 1968 (p.77).

As noted earlier, the majority of respondents were living with their husband/cohabitee at the time of the interview and basic information about their spouse's employment was obtained. Table 8:10 shows the type of work performed by the respondents' husbands/cohabitees and indicates a concentration in manufacturing, and particularly machine operation.

The husbands/cohabitees of the white respondents worked on average 42 hours a week and the Asian and West Indian men 43 hours. Seven West Indian spouses, four Asian and three white men worked a shift system.

In the 1976 Rex and Tomlinson survey heads of households were asked what their income was and it was found that "55.9% of West Indians, 53% of Asians and 71.4% of whites were earning below £2,500 per year at a time when the average weekly wage for men and women was £46 or £2,392 per annum" (p.81). Table 8:11 shows the income of my respondents (where head of household) or that of their spouse in 1976.

TABLE 8:10

Employment of Husband/Cohabitee

	<u>White</u>	<u>West Indian</u>	<u>Asian</u>
Machine Operator	2	3	5
Foundry Worker	-	2	2
British Rail Employee	-	4	-
Toolmaker	1	1	1
Toolsetter	2	1	-
Warehouse Checker/Storeman	2	-	-
Assembler	-	-	2
Serviceman	-	2	-
Welder	-	1	-
Maintenance Fitter	-	-	1
Metal Polisher	1	-	-
Garage Attendant	1	-	-
Milkman	-	-	1
Motor Mechanic	-	-	1
Bakery Worker	-	-	1
Printer's Assistant	-	1	-
Driver	-	1	-
Barman	-	1	-
Own business (Clothing manufacturer)	-	-	1
Jeweller	-	1	-
Social Worker	1	-	-
Student Doctor	-	-	1
Draughts men	1	-	-
Unemployed ¹	2	-	5

1. Of the 5 unemployed Asian men 2 left work to get a better job, one because of going on holiday to India and 2 because of health. The white men were made redundant.

TABLE 8:11

Income of Head of Household (In 1976)

	White	Asian	West Indian
£500 - £999	-	-	2 (8%) ¹
1000 - 1499	-	-	3 (10%) ¹
1500 - 1999	-	1 (4%)	5 (16%)
2000 - 2499	4 (25%)	8 (36%)	8 (26%)
2500 - 2999	1 (6%)	3 (14%)	4 (13%)
3000 - 3499	3 (19%)	1 (4%)	2 (6%)
3500 - 4499	4 (25%)	2 (9%)	-
4500 - 5499	-	1 (4%)	1 (3%)
D/K, Refused	4 (25%)	6 (27%)	6 (19%)

Note:

1. All single or separated women

Finally, basic information about the respondents' housing was obtained and there was found to be sharp differences, in terms of type of housing, between the three racial groups. Thus while 44 per cent of the white and 39 per cent of the West Indian respondents rented council property none of the Asian respondents lived in such accommodation (Table 8:12)

Respondents were also asked whether they had sole, or shared, use of the following:- a fixed sink, fixed bath or shower, fixed hand basin, inside toilet, garden or yard - and how many rooms were occupied by the household. The majority (12/16) of white respondents had sole use of all the mentioned amenities although two families shared them all, one shared a garden and one respondent had no garden. Twenty-three West Indian respondents had sole use of all amenities, one shared a garden and five had no garden. Among the Asian respondents, on the other hand, only 62 per cent (13/21) had sole use of all amenities

while two respondents shared all facilities, one shared a sink and yard, two had no inside toilet, one no basin and one family had no bath, basin or inside toilet. The Asian families, however, tended to occupy more rooms (Table 8:13).

TABLE 8:12

Type of Housing Occupied by Respondents

	<u>White</u>	<u>West Indian</u>	<u>Asian</u>
Owned - purchased outright	-	-	8 (36%)
Mortgage/loan (husband alone)	1 (6%)	6 (19%)	6 (27%)
Mortgage with husband	1 (6%)	6 (19%)	1 (4%)
Private rented	4 (25%)	-	1 (4%)
Council rented	7 (44%)	12 (39%)	-
Housing association	3 (19%)	5 (16%)	-
Living with relatives	-	-	4 (18%)
Unknown	-	2 (6%)	2 (9%)

TABLE 8:13

Number of Rooms Occupied by Respondents

	<u>White</u>	<u>West Indian</u>	<u>Asian</u>
1	1 (6%)	-	2 (9%)
2	1 (6%)	1 (3%)	-
3	-	3 (10%)	1 (4%)
4	2 (12%)	5 (16%)	2 (9%)
5	10 (62%)	11 (35%)	7 (32%)
6	2 (12%)	6 (19%)	5 (23%)
7	-	-	3 (14%)
8	-	-	1 (4%)
Unknown	-	5 (16%)	1 (4%)

CHAPTER 9

THE SURVEY AREA:

CHILD CARE PROVISION AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The women interviewed in my survey live in an area, to the north-west of Birmingham city centre, which is popularly referred to as Handsworth although the survey area itself encompasses four wards - Soho, Handsworth, Sandwell and Newtown. Since my sample was drawn from a larger sample of households interviewed in the study by Rex and Tomlinson the survey area is the same as that used in this earlier study.

Handsworth has received a considerable amount of attention from both the media and researchers and has been described as "a typical inner-city suburb, once prosperous, now on the decline, and multi-racial" (John, p.7), "a symbol of areas of black, and particularly West Indian, settlement in Birmingham and possibly of black immigrant settlement in Britain as a whole" (Rex and Tomlinson, p.70). Certainly various aspects of West Indian and Asian culture are very much in evidence¹ and this reflects the high proportion of black residents:

TABLE 9:1

Residents with both parents born in the New Commonwealth as percentage of total population. 1971.

SOHO	HANDSWORTH	SANDWELL	NEWTOWN
48.0	32.5	20.0	16.6

Source: 1971 Census in Rex and Tomlinson, p.75

Also, the visibility of black culture is partly a reflection of the younger age profile of the West Indian and Asian residents compared with the elderly white

1. See Research Chronicle for a description of my first impressions of the area.

residents. In their sample Rex and Tomlinson found that over half their white respondents were aged over 60 while only 8 per cent of the West Indian and 4.6 per cent of the Asians interviewed were over this age:

TABLE 9:2

Age Structure of Respondents in Study by Rex and Tomlinson.

	<u>West Indian</u>	<u>Asian</u>	<u>Great Britain</u>
16 - 34	16.2%	34.8%	13.3%
35 - 59	73.6%	60.6%	36.0%
60 - 74	8.4%	4.6%	36.7%
75+	0.5%	-	14.0%
Refused	1.3%	-	-

Source: Rex and Tomlinson, p.77

This finding is supported by the 1971 Census, which shows that only 1 per cent of the over 60 year old population of the four wards was residents with both parents born in the New Commonwealth. Since Black and Asian residents are concentrated in the child-bearing age groups, while over 50 per cent of white residents are aged over 60, it is not surprising to find that the proportion of under fives with both parents born in the New Commonwealth is higher than the proportion for all age groups:

TABLE 9:3

Population under 5 with both parents born in New Commonwealth as percentage of total under 5 population. 1971.

SOHO	HANDSWORTH	SANDWELL	NEWTOWN
78.6	51.4	40.5	33.3

Source: 1971 Census in Abstract of Birmingham Statistics, 1976-77

The fact that approximately half the under fives in the area have a cultural history distinct from the white children should be acknowledged within pre-school provision in that the promotion of different cultures and the development of positive identity amongst black, as well as white, children is important. The reality of the situation is, however, that where cultural differences are recognised black children are frequently exposed to negative attitudes towards their culture¹.

Another factor influencing the need for pre-school provision is housing conditions, and many families in Handsworth suffer seriously from overcrowding and a lack of basic amenities:

TABLE 9:4

Percentage of households at more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ persons per room, 1971.

SOHO	HANDSWORTH	SANDWELL	NEWTOWN	BIRMINGHAM (All Districts)
12.2	6.6	3.9	3.7	2.7

Percentage of households with exclusive use of hot water, bath or shower and inside W.C., 1971.

SOHO	HANDSWORTH	SANDWELL	NEWTOWN	BIRMINGHAM (All Districts)
31.0	45.3	70.1	60.5	65.7

Source: 1971 Census in Abstract of Birmingham Statistics, 1976-77

Similarly the LSDC survey found that almost half the families interviewed in Handsworth had no access to space where the pre-school children could play (p.36). Since space is necessary for children to engage in exploration and creative play this finding, together with the statistics showing overcrowding, point to a high level of need for places where children can play.

1. This point is discussed later in the Chapter.

Finally, the 1971 Census shows that the economic activity rate for married women in 3 of the 4 wards, covered by the survey area, was higher than the average for Birmingham as a whole and this is yet another indication of the need for child care facilities:

TABLE 9:5

Economic Activity Rate of Married Women (per thousand married women aged 15 or over)

SOHO	HANDSWORTH	SANDWELL	NEWTOWN	BIRMINGHAM (All Districts)
430	499	515	545	475

Source: 1971 Census in Abstract of Birmingham Statistics, 1976-77

Does child care provision in the survey area meet this need? Facilities in Handsworth are affected by the overall policy of Birmingham Social Services Committee and thus must be considered within this context. All child care provision will be examined but attention will be focused upon day nurseries and childminders since these provide full-day care which is most suitable for the children of economically active mothers.

1. Child Care Provision in Birmingham and the Survey Area

The latest figures available at the time of the survey (March 1978) showed that local authority day care was available for 23 per cent of children in Birmingham. Ten per cent of children received nursery education (including part-timers), 9 per cent attended playgroups, 3 per cent were registered at day nurseries (including private and voluntary) and 0.9 per cent of children in Birmingham were placed, by the Social Services Department, with childminders (B.C.D.C. p.31)

1. Local Authority Day Nurseries, Nursery Centres and Day Care Centres

Day nurseries in Birmingham are open from 7.30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday and only close for industrial and bank holidays. Most places are

provided on a full-time basis and in 1979 only 6 per cent of the children at day nurseries in the city attended part-time, that is, either a morning or an afternoon session (Report of the Director, 28 February 1979). Day nurseries are therefore convenient for employed mothers except that places are reserved for 'priority' children. The emphasis in day nurseries is on welfare, rather than education, and they are funded by Social Services Departments and staffed by nursery nurses and assistants - there are not normally qualified teachers on the staff. The recommended staff/children ratio, given in the Department of Health and Social Security Circular 6/65, is one staff member to five children although a higher staff ratio is advised if there is a high proportion of very young children. Day nurseries will take children from six weeks old and parents are charged fees which are individually determined by each authority (see Table 9:10).

Nursery centres are similar to day nurseries except that they aim to combine welfare and education and are jointly funded by the Social Services and Education Departments. Nursery centres are staffed by both teachers and nursery nurses.

The three day care centres in Birmingham aim to provide extensive help to pre-school children and their families in areas of language problems and/or social deprivation.

Statistics on Birmingham:

In March 1978 there were 22 local authority day nurseries in Birmingham providing care for 1,127 children, two nursery centres catering for 90 children, and a further 63 places were available at the three day care centres (see Table 9:6). Thus, in March 1978, Birmingham provided day care for a total of 1,280 children and this figure was the same in February 1979 (Report of the Director). However

TABLE 9.6

Child Care Provision in Birmingham

Type of Provision:	March 1977		March 1978	
	Number	Number of children	Number	Number of children
Local Authority Day Nurseries and Nursery Centres*	24	1,217	24	1,217
Day Care Centres*	3	63	3	63
Registered Childminders*	585	1,664	640	1,795
Private and voluntary nurseries*	29	925	28	883
Playgroups*	279	6,452	260	6,530
Nursery Schools**			30	1,730
Nursery Classes**			76	

1. These figures include 2 nurseries at hospitals (All Saints, Lodge Road, B18 and Rubery Hill, B45) and the nursery at Birmingham University.

Sources: * Research Planning and Development Section of Social Services Department, April 1977 - March 1978

**Department of Education, 1978 - 1979

an additional 8 places became available in March 1979, when a replacement day nursery (Brougham St.) was opened, and Alcester Road, which was due to open in April 1979, would provide a further 50 places. Furthermore another new day centre (Frankley) was included in the 1978/9 capital programme. Indeed Birmingham provided more child days in day nurseries per thousand children under five than the national average, although substantially fewer than Manchester:

TABLE 9:7

Day Nurseries - Child days per 1,000 under five

Average of all Metropolitan Districts	2,742
Birmingham.....	4,122
Manchester.....	8,069
Liverpool.....	5,814
Sheffield.....	2,172
Leeds.....	1,984

Source: Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, Personal Social Services Estimates 1978/9 in Report of the Principal Chief Officer and City Treasurer, 24 November 1978

Criteria for entry to a day nursery in Birmingham;

Although Birmingham's day nursery provision was higher than the national average the criteria for admission was in line with overall state policy (see Chapter 2) in that the aim was to compensate for the emotional, physical or intellectual deprivation of the child. Thus, in February 1979, the Director of Social Services reaffirmed the policy of the 1974 Committee which stated that the criteria for determining whether a child falls within the priority category was:

"children whose admission is urgently required on grounds such as the break up of the family, illness or confinement of the mother, medical reasons occasioned by unsatisfactory housing conditions, or in fact other circumstances as would justify their admission on social need or for health reasons."

Report of the Director

Indeed more (49%) nursery places were allocated as a consequence of referrals from Welfare Agencies (Health Visitors and General Practitioners 29%, Social Workers 24% and other social work agencies and hospitals 6%) than from the mothers themselves (41%) and a breakdown of the reasons for admission shows the priority given to children of single working parents, and the emphasis placed on welfare.

TABLE 9:8

Breakdown of the 1,419 children on the register at 1 January 1979.

Single parents who are working	888	62%
Children who require places because of parental problems :		
E.g. ESN parents		
Parents suffering from mental illness		
Parents suffering from alcoholism or drugs		
Inadequate parenting resulting in failure to thrive	167	12%
Children at severe risk because of known or potential		
child abuse by parent(s)	142	10%
Children whose physical or mental development is		
substantially below normal because of home setting	100	7%
Mentally and physically handicapped children whose develop-		
ment can benefit from a day nursery environment	69	5%
Parents incapacitated or in hospital	25	2%
Non-Priorities	14	1%
Staff Children	17	1%
	<u>1,419</u>	<u>100%</u>

Source: Report of the Director

The attitude of the Tory controlled Social Services Committee in Birmingham was that the provision of day care is a privilege not to be abused and "In order to avoid abuse of this service it is proposed to introduce a form which will require parents to give consent to further enquiries being made" (Report

of the Director). The consent clause, which the parent applying for day care was compelled to sign, was as follows:

I hereby give my consent to further enquiries being made of my Doctor, or through a Social Worker or Health Visitor as considered necessary

Moreover, the introduction of this clause was only one aspect of a new policy designed "to crack down on parents who use the city's day nurseries as a convenient all-day baby-minding service" and it complemented another policy change which proposed that:

In future, children will be accepted only part-time except in urgent cases where a single mother has to work all day or a mother is in hospital. There will be short shrift for the mother who dumps her child at the nursery and goes back to bed." (Birmingham Evening Mail, 27 September 1978)

As the Birmingham Children's Defence Campaign pointed out, the decision to concentrate on part-time, rather than full-time, provision was "a timely political gesture inspired by the desire to reduce waiting lists" (p. 29), and indeed this was indicated by the statement made by the Chairman to the Social Services Committee:

Day care for children is available to too few families, and in some cases abused by parents leaving their children in the nursery for very long hours unnecessarily. The Committee should insist that children are only placed part-time: only in certain specified circumstances (e.g. where a single parent is at work, or where a mother is in hospital, or where the child is seriously at risk) will a child be allowed to stay all day and every day. In this way far more children, especially the younger ones, can be accommodated ... These benefits will be achieved at no extra cost" (my emphasis) (4 October 1978)

However, while it would be theoretically possible to cater for twice as many children part-time, as opposed to full-time, the problem was that (as Table 9.8 shows) the vast majority of children using day care fell into precisely those categories which were exempted from the part-time proviso. Moreover,

the Social Services Operational Review for 1977/78 shows that 508 of the 714 children on the city waiting list were priority children. The figures were exactly the same in March 1978 as they were twelve months earlier, which suggests that waiting lists are closed at a certain number, and thus it is feasible to assume that waiting lists are an underestimation of the true demand.

Cost:

The position in Birmingham, therefore, was that insufficient day nursery provision existed and the result was that places were reserved for children who were defined as 'deprived' in some way. To this extent Birmingham conformed with the situation in the country as a whole but the introduction of the consent clause and the attempt to further ration full-time provision was not typical. Moreover, a further aspect of Birmingham Social Services Department's policy was that it spent less per day nursery place than other cities, and England as a whole.

TABLE 9.9

Net Cost per Child Day in a Day Nursery:

Average of all 36 Metropolitan Districts	£5.32
Birmingham	£4.83
Manchester	£6.07
Liverpool	£5.01
Sheffield ..	£6.95
Leeds	£5.43

Source: Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy, Personal Social Services Estimates 1978/9 in Report of the Principal Chief Officer and City Treasurer, 24 November, 1978.

How Birmingham economised on day nursery provision is difficult to determine. Indeed in December 1977 the ratio of staff to children in city day nurseries was above the national recommendation of 1:5 since 334 qualified and 69 unqualified staff cared for 1,217 children which is a ratio of approximately 1:3 (Chairman of Social Services to Cllr Theresa Stewart). One possible explanation is, however, that parents contributed a higher proportion of the costs than in other local authorities, although parental contribution represents a small proportion of total day nursery expenditure. Until 1 April 1979 the maximum means-tested charges made for day nursery places were £12.50 for staff and non-priority children and £6.25 for priority children but as from 1 April 1979 all new admissions were subjected to a maximum charge of £14 a week. This increase was expected to raise a further £18,260 towards the cost of running the day nurseries but, even with this additional money, the total income from fees provided less than 10 per cent of day nursery expenditure (1978/80: £170,960 income from fees, £1,760,090 expenditure). Thus in terms of the Social Services budget the increase was relatively insignificant but it sharply affected the parents whose children attended day care facilities. Moreover, a comparative analysis of charges in other local authority day nurseries indicates that Birmingham's 1979 means-tested maximum was substantially higher than many (see Table 9-10).

In addition to charging parents substantial fees, the Birmingham scales also treated one-parent families unfairly in three ways, and this has been noted by Jane Strenther (Director, National Council for One Parent Families):

"First, they are based on Supplementary Benefit rates which give one-parent families a needs level £9.70 below that of a two-parent family, in similar circumstances.

TABLE 9:10

Weekly Charges for Local Authority Day Nurseries, January/February 1979

<u>Local Authority</u>	<u>Flat Rate</u>	<u>Means-tested Maximum</u>
Barnet	£1.25	—
Brent	£1.00	—
Coventry	—	£8.45
Croydon	£3.75	—
Ealing	—	£11.25
Hackney	—	£8.25 (from April 1979)
Hammermith	£3.25 (working parents) £2.00 (non-working)	—
Harrow	—	£12.00
Hounslow	—	£10.00
Islington	£1.00	—
Kensington & Chelsea	—	£14.00
Lambeth	—	£7.50
Lewisham	—	£8.00
Liverpool	£1.65 (priority) £9.00 (non-priority)	—
Manchester	£2.00 (one parent) £6.25 (two parent)	—
Merton	—	£7.85
Newham	—	£7.50
Newcastle	75p	—
Richmond	—	£6.20
Salford	£2.50	—
Tower Hamlets	—	£7.50
Wandsworth	£3.00	—

Source: Jane Strenther

Secondly, the 'needs' are augmented by a percentage of income which is five per cent per person thus giving a one-parent family a lower addition than a similar two-parent family.

Thirdly, the 'assessed charge' is calculated by dividing the 'assessed income' by the number of people in the family which will be less for a one-parent family than for a two-parent family with the same number of children." (17 February 1979). The result is a marked difference in the assessed charges of one and two parent families:

<u>Net income per week</u>	<u>Assessed Charge</u>	
	<u>£7 p.w.</u>	<u>£14 p.w.</u>
Single parent plus one child	£42.30	£58.00
Single parent plus two children	£56.50	£81.00
Two parents plus one child	£62.75	£87.50
Two parents plus two children	£79.00	£114.00

Source: Report of the Director 28 February 1979

Situation in the Survey Area

Day nurseries which operated within the survey area were obviously affected by the overall policy of Birmingham Social Services Committee. Consequently the vast majority of places were reserved for priority children and indeed, since July 1977, none of the nurseries in the survey area had placed non-priority children on the waiting lists. Moreover, parents whose children attended the nurseries suffered the consequences of attempts to restrict full-time provision, and the introduction of increased charges, and one-parent families the unfair assessment described above.

There is not a precise catchment area for day nurseries but children normally attend facilities either near their home or convenient for their mother's workplace. Four day nurseries operated within the survey area, and a further two in the immediate vicinity. The number of priority children on the waiting lists gives an indication of unmet demand for places:

TABLE 9.11

Day Nurseries in the Survey Area	Number of places	Priority Waiting Lists		
		July 1979	November 1977	March 1978
1. 50 Gee Street, B.19	60	47	40	16
2. 1 Soho Road, B.21	60	89	74	98
3. 21 Louise Road, B.21	50	26	31	17
4. Brougham Street, B.19*	50			
<u>In the immediate vicinity</u>				
5. 73 Trinity Road, B.8	50	31	46	56
6. Birchfield, Houghton Road, B.20	60	33	40	49

* Brougham Street day nursery was opened in March 1979 as a replacement for Carnegie Institute, in Hunter's Road, which had provided 42 places.

Source: Birmingham Social Services Department

In addition to these day nurseries one nursery centre (Bacchus Road), which provided 45 places, was just outside the survey area and two of the three city day care centres (Holly Road - 15 places and St. Simeon - 30 places) operated within the survey area.

2. Childminders

In Birmingham, in 1976, more children were cared for by registered minders than attended local authority day nurseries and nursery centres (Table 9.6).

Childminding is largely a private arrangement between minder and the parent of the minded child and conditions such as cost and hours are normally

negotiated between these parties without the intervention of the local authority. (The average fee charged by childminders in Birmingham was £6 - £7 per child, per week in 1978). Indeed, on the basis of official figures, pilot probes and existing research, the Jacksons (1979) estimate that at least 100,000 children, 50,000 West Indian, are cared for by unregistered minders who have no contact at all with the local authority (Ch.10). Although this arrangement is officially illegal, however, since anyone paid to look after an unrelated pre-school child in their own home must register with the Social Services Department if the child is cared for at least two hours during the day at least one day a week, the law is largely unenforced. Thus although the penalty for not registering is a £50 fine or three months in prison, prosecutions are rare (between 1964 and 1969 only 13 unregistered minders were prosecuted in Haringey - Jackson p.30). Moreover, registration itself does not necessarily imply that the minder provides a high standard of child care since it is based on the physical environment (e.g. cubic airspace per child, hot and cold water, fire guards etc.) rather than any clear concept of child care and the minders need have no special training. Indeed the criteria for registration varies between areas as does the number of children for whom a minder can register. Thus while the Ministry of Health Circular 37/68 recommends a maximum of three children to one minder the figure for Birmingham was four. Similarly although the childminder co-ordinators in Birmingham did not like a minder to care for more than one baby under twelve months this became difficult to enforce because the Employment Protection Act, which entitles women to maternity leave, increased the demand for day care for babies. The Social Services Department do not, however, advertise for childminders but rather there is mutual co-operation between the co-ordinators

and health visitors who may suggest to a woman that she take up childminding. No attempt is made in Birmingham to attract West Indian and Asian childminders and in Area 3, which includes the survey area, only two Asian minders were registered in 1978.

Support Services for Minders

Birmingham Social Services Department provided a number of support services for childminders in addition to registration. A childminder course, for registered minders, was run jointly by the Social Services Department and Bournville College. This course operated one day a week for six weeks and included discussions on play, health care, accidents in the home and the law but there was nothing on the vital area of cross-cultural minding. Also playgroups existed in the city for childminders and their children to attend. However, while these support services are to be welcomed, it must be remembered that minders' participation was voluntary and consequently the services would not affect standards among those minders who did not take part. The only service which was provided for all registered minders in Birmingham was a scheme for the insurance of minders (approved by Social Services Committee, 1 November 1978).

Paid Minders

The Social Services Department also paid 15 selected minders, in the south side of Birmingham, for minding children who would otherwise need care in a day nursery or residential home. From 1 January 1979 these minders were paid £9 a week per child, increased to £10 in April, with mothers paying the usual means-tested contribution and Social Services making up the difference. This was significantly cheaper, from the point of view of the local authority, than the cost involved in providing a day nursery place and it was planned to extend the scheme to 65 minders elsewhere in the city.

Childminding in the Survey Area

In addition to the usual Social Services support for childminders two other projects existed within the survey area.

1. Lozells Social Development Centre Under Fives Unit and St. James' Centre

The LSDC Under Fives Unit was a childminder support service for minders in the Handsworth and Lozells area. The Unit ran a mini-bus which transported local minders and their children to playgroup sessions in specially converted premises. Attendance at any of the seven weekly playgroup sessions was voluntary with minders attending one or two sessions a week. The playgroup was staffed by one full-time paid organizer and the sessions provided an opportunity for childminders and their children to meet each other. The aim was to encourage minders to recognize the value of play and stimulation. Eighteen minders and sixty children regularly attended the playgroup at the time of the survey.

In addition, the Unit ran a toy library, and a Playbus which parked, for eight sessions a week, in various streets around Handsworth and Lozells, and provided playgroup facilities for the children of minders and local mothers. The Playbus was staffed by one full-time paid organizer and catered for between 10 and 12 children at each session. Many of the children who attended the Playbus were Asian and there was an attempt to establish a language project which would be attached to the Unit.

The Under Fives Unit also encouraged and supported childminders who wished to set up independent groups.

Both the Unit and the Playbus were established by voluntary effort, the Bus in 1973 and the Unit a year later. Finance for the purchase and conversion of the Playbus was provided by the local CRC, and the Clarkson Foundation gave a grant of £1,000 which was used mainly for the conversion of the Unit's

premises. Running and staff costs were obtained from various Charitable Trusts but since 1978 the Social Services Department have provided 40 per cent of the Unit's costs, the remainder coming from the Van Leer Project (see later). The Playbus was financed under the Urban Aid Programme.

Since 1977 attempts were made to establish another support unit in Handsworth but this was inhibited by lack of funding. A childminders playgroup was established in a church hall (St James' Centre) but only five minders attended at the time of the survey, partly because the premises were unsuitable. Consequently attempts were being made to convert a private house into suitable premises but sufficient money had not yet been obtained. The childminders' playgroup at St James' Centre was initially financed by Van Leer, and later received a small grant from Social Services but this was subsequently withdrawn.

2. The Van Leer Project

The Bernard Van Leer Foundation sponsors selected projects which "approach the basic problem of how education might contribute to individual and social development in conditions of adversity principally through the young child and his family" (Newsletter, p. 1). One of these projects was a scheme in Birmingham which aimed to diversify the function of three primary schools in an attempt to improve the health, educational and social problems of families in the neighbourhood. The childminding programme was a section of this wider project.

In 1975 three part-time Childminder Advisers were appointed and attached to three primary schools in Birchfield and Winson Green. These Advisers visited childminders in the area and provided toy kits which enabled "the adviser to advise on the value of play and development of language" (Progress Report). Minders were also encouraged to attend playgroups, and unregistered minders were persuaded to become registered.

This situation continued until 1978 when three Advisers transferred from the Social Services to the Education Department and their job description was broadened to include all pre-school provision. In 1980 Van Leer withdrew from the project.

Unregistered Minding in the Survey Area

In 1970 Augustine John suggested that "there is a flourishing trade in unofficial child-minding", and observed that:

"To stand on Grove Lane or Rookery Road around 6.30 in the morning and to watch streams of West Indian mothers taking toddlers by the hand into child-minding establishments - dingy front rooms in which anything from half-a-dozen to a dozen children will be herded for the rest of the day, a paraffin oil-heater in a corner in winter, - is to observe a very different world from the one inhabited by social scientists, teachers and officials" (p.15)

Nine years later the Jacksons reported a similar 'December Dawnwatch' around Rookery Road which observed 17, mostly Asian and West Indian, babies and toddlers being left with minders between 5.30 and 7.10 a.m. (p.11)

The impression gained from these reports was not however supported by those connected with childminding in the area. Thus, the Van Leer Advisers reported that "it is of interest to note that very few unregistered minders have been found" (Progress Report) and their feeling was that rather than unregistered minding, minding within the family was widespread, particularly among the Asian community. Similarly the LSDC study did not observe "streams" of mothers taking children to unofficial minders.

3. Private and Voluntary Nurseries

As with childminders, private and voluntary nurseries must register with the Local Authority Social Services Department which stipulates the minimum standards which must be attained, e.g. ratio of staff to children, space necessary,

safety arrangements etc. The age range of children taken, hours and costs vary between nurseries.

In Birmingham, in March 1978, 28 private and voluntary nurseries provided care for 883 children (Table 9:6). Indeed 15 per cent of all nursery places in the city were provided by voluntary bodies the equivalent figures for other authorities are: Manchester 4 per cent, Liverpool 1 per cent - Report of the Principal Chief Officer and City Treasurer) and in March 1978 147 priority children were placed in voluntary nurseries by the Social Services Department. No factory nurseries existed in Birmingham although two hospitals provided creche facilities.

Situation in the Survey Area

Two private day nurseries and four voluntary nurseries, including one hospital creche, operated within the survey area in June 1979 (see Table 9:12). These nurseries provided a total of 189 places, thirty-four of which were occupied by children referred by the Social Services Department. The University nursery restricted admission to the children of staff and students at the University, while the hospital creche only cared for children while their mother was on duty. Three of the nurseries did not admit children under two years of age. Hours of opening varied slightly and fees ranged from £6.25 p.w. to £15.15 p.w. As with local authority day nurseries waiting lists were long.

4. Playgroups

Playgroups are unsuitable for the children of working mothers since they usually only operate for half day sessions (2 - 2½ hours) two or three days a week and not all the children attend every session. Moreover, playgroups are generally run by volunteer parents rather than, or in addition to, paid staff. Some

TABLE 9.17

PRIVATE AND VOLUNTARY NURSERIES IN THE SURVEY AREA (June 1979)

Private Day Nurseries	No. of places	Opening hours	Age range	Fees	Waiting list
Aston University Day Nursery, Lawrence Street, B.6	40	8.45 am - 5 pm	6 wks - 5 yrs*	£5.25 - £13.50 pw + £1.65 lunch	25
Westcott Day Nursery, 122 Trinity Road, B.6	20	7.30 am - 5.30 pm	? - 5 yrs	£8 pw	-
Voluntary Day Nurseries					
All Saints Nursery, All Saints Hospital, Lodge Road, B.16	40	7.20 am - 6 pm	6 wks - 5 yrs*	£1.25 day	20
Beatrice Day Nursery, 111 Churchill Road, B.20	33	7.30 am - 6 pm	0 - 5 yrs*	Max. £3 day	-
Marcus Garvey Day Care Centre, 97-99 Linwood Road, B.21	32	7.30 am - 6 am	? - 5 yrs	Max. £2 day	20+
Handsworth Day Care Centre, 34 St. Peter Road, B.20	24	7 am - 6 pm	? - 5 yrs*	Max. £6 week	30+

* Older children sometimes taken in school holidays

Source: Direct contact with Nurseries

playgroups attract a grant (usually small) from the Local Authority.

Six playgroups operated within the survey area - (1) Clocktower Playgroup, St. James Road, B. 21 (2) Oaklands Centre Playgroup, Oaklands Road, B. 21 (3) Rookery Road Church Playgroup, B. 20 (4) Villa Road Playgroup, B. 20 (5) New Trinity Playgroup (WELD), Wilson Road, B. 19 (6) Beatrix Playgroup, 11 Church Hill Road, B. 20 - in addition to the Playbus run by Lozells Social Development Centre.

5. Nursery Schools and Nursery Classes

Nursery schools are separate specially equipped schools with their own Head Teacher, while nursery classes are attached to primary or infant schools whose Head is also the Nursery Head. Both are run by the Education Department and are free to parents, except that full-time children pay for their lunch. However, neither nursery schools nor classes are at present convenient for full-time employed mothers since they operate a normal school day (approx. 9.30 a.m. - 3.30 p.m.), are closed during school holidays, rarely admit children under 3 years of age, and the majority of children attend part-time (either a morning or an afternoon session). At the time of the survey there was an attempt to extend the hours of selected nursery schools in the city by seconding two additional nursery nurses to each school. Unfortunately this scheme was opposed by the National Union of Teachers who seemed to fear a deterioration in the status and conditions of their members if they worked closely with nursery nurses. Difficulties arise, once attempts are made to combine the functions of caring and educating in day care, because the conditions of work of those in the caring role are at present inferior to the educators - Matrons and nursery nurses work longer hours and have shorter holidays than Head Teachers and nursery teachers, but receive less pay.

Situation in the Survey Area

Two nursery schools operated within the survey area and a further nine infant and primary schools provided nursery classes. Table 9:13 shows the number of children attending these schools and, as with day nursery provision, reveals lengthy waiting lists.

Comments on Child Care Provision in the Survey Area

The only forms of child care provision which offer suitable hours for full-time working mothers are day nurseries (including nursery centres and day care centres) and childminders. The number of children on the priority waiting lists for day nursery places in the survey area indicates the inadequacy of this provision. Social services projections until 1981/82 did not include any additional day nurseries or day nursery replacements. However, while day nursery provision continued to be strictly rationed childminding was being encouraged as an alternative form of child care. Thus Birmingham Social Services Committee introduced a scheme for paying minders to care for 'priority' children and the range of support services for minders was extended. The policy seemed to be that:

"childminders will continue to play an ever increasing part in the day care programme of the pre-school child, especially when taking into consideration the economic restraints in the Capital Building Programme and the extended completion dates of the full pre-school programme" (Van Leer, Progress Report, p.3)

Childminding, as it exists at present, is, however, unsuitable as a form of child care for a number of reasons. Firstly, because payment is a private arrangement between the mother and minder, which is rarely subsidized by the state, child care is often a major expenditure from the mother's earnings, but because the mother cannot pay more the childminder is exploited and suffers, in an exaggerated form, all the oppression of the housewife. Secondly, since the

TABLE 9:13

NURSERY SCHOOLS AND NURSERY CLASSES IN THE SURVEY AREA (June 1979)

<u>Nursery Schools</u>	<u>Rising Fives</u> ¹			<u>Pre-Fives</u> ²		
				Registered	Waiting List	
Newtown Nursery School, Hockley Close, B.19	18			15	1	
Benson Nursery School, Berry Street, B.18	18			80	45	
<u>Nursery Classes</u>	<u>4 Year Olds</u>			<u>3 Year Olds</u>		
	f/t	p/t	waiting list	f/t	p/t	waiting list
Grove Infant School, Grove Lane, B.21	21	16	51	9	1	85
Rookery Road Infant School Rookery Road, B.21	40	20	150	40	20	-
Wattville Infant School, George Street, B.21	40	-	75	-	20	75
Wilkes Green Infant School Antrobus Road, B.21	33	6	15	12	24	43
James Watt Infant School, Boulton Road, B.21	44	-	22	-	16	43
Welford Primary School, Welford Road, B.20	45	-	-	-	30	-
Anglesey Infant School, Anglesey Street, B.19	27	15	2	33	5	42
St. Augustines (RC) J.I., Avenue Road, B.21	26	9	17	See footnote 3.		
St. Mary's (CE) J.I., Hampstead Road, B.20	18	14	13	2	6	42

Notes:

1. 5th birthday before 31 December 1979
2. 5th birthday between 31 December 1979 and 1 May 1980
3. Age taken as at 31 August so that some of the children categorised as "4 year olds" actually aged 3. Children are not admitted until they have passed their 3rd birthday.

childminder has to combine her domestic tasks with the care of several pre-school children the time she can devote to the children is obviously restricted.

Similarly, a mother generally uses a childminder who lives nearby so it is likely that those minders who care for children in the survey area suffer from the overcrowding and lack of amenities which characterises the area. Thus scope for creative play is limited.

Inadequate housing and a high economic activity rate among married women in the survey area results in a high demand, and need, for day care. However, Local Authority nurseries do not even provide sufficient places for 'priority' children. The hours provided by nursery schools/classes and playgroups are too short to cater for the needs of children whose parents work full-time and private nurseries are expensive. Consequently the majority of working mothers in Handsworth, as those in other areas of Britain, are forced to make private arrangements for the care of their children while they work. As I have argued, childminding is a form of day care which is unsatisfactory for a number of reasons and the arrangement whereby parents share child care on a split-shift system is also obviously inadequate. As the authors of the LSDC study argue "the hazards of this system are clear, in terms both of the lack of involvement with the development of young children, and of their physical safety, with the one parent available either weary from work, or more often actually asleep" (p.39). Moreover this study found that in most cases this arrangement was used only after attempts to obtain other provision had failed or where the hours provided were unsuitable. Obviously, where a mother has to arrange her work pattern to conform to the work pattern of her husband/other relative/friend or to the hours provided by the nursery school her employment options are severely limited.

Child Care and Black Children

Half the under five population in the Handsworth area was born to New Commonwealth parents and current childminding is a particularly unsuitable form of child care for these children. The majority of childminders are white and do not receive any training in respect of cross-cultural minding. Under these circumstances the identity of a black child who spends all day with a white minder is likely to become confused, especially where the minder exhibits negative attitudes towards the child's racial group. A survey of 13 minders by the Westminster Community Relations Commission (Who Minds?) found that eight childminders, seven minding children of a different race, recognized that they have different methods of child rearing from those of the children's parents. Moreover, four of these minders evaluated their methods of child rearing as 'better' than the parents. As the authors of this study argue, "Such a negative evaluation of the parent can hardly foster a positive self-image in the child, or strengthen his home relationships" (p. 53). I found that, during informal discussions (see Research Chronicle), a large majority of the childminder advisers and minders in my survey area expressed negative attitudes towards Asian and West Indian parents. I did not encounter even one attempt, among minders, to promote cultural differences and the least harmful attitude expressed was "all children are the same".

Compared to childminders day nurseries have more scope to provide multi-racial child care. A CRC survey (1977) of 33 nurseries found that a majority of their sample of nursery officers (21/33) replied positively to the question 'has the nursery a role in helping the ethnic minority child take a pride in the culture of his country of origin?' (p. 27-31).

Part 2

Employment Opportunities Available to Women Living in the Survey Area

Inadequate child care provision is only one of several factors which restrict women in their choice of employment. Even childless women workers are constrained by the existence of sexual divisions within the labour market, with women concentrated in the lower sections of the structure. In Chapter Two I described how these sexual divisions are perpetuated by many employers who, accepting the notion that work among women is secondary to their primary role in the home, believe that it is not worth training or promoting women workers. So far, however, the situation of women workers has been considered on a national basis and I move on to a discussion of employment opportunities and employers' attitudes in relation to the survey area. In this analysis I refer to my own research findings which are based on a survey conducted in the Handsworth area in May 1978.

Methodology of Survey

The aims of this survey were to assess the availability of work for women living in the survey area and to consider the attitudes of local employers to (a) the employment of women, (b) the employment of mothers of pre-school children, (c) the provision of child care facilities and (d) part-time labour. Two methods were employed. Firstly the job columns of the Birmingham Evening Mail were scanned every day for about two weeks (2 - 15 May inclusive and 18 May 1978) and jobs considered suitable for the women in my sample (in terms of type of work and travelling distance from Handsworth) were selected. Firms which had placed the advertisements were then telephoned and asked to give an indication of the number of applications which had been received and the proportion of male

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and female applicants. The second method was to interview the Personnel Officers of four major firms in the area:

<u>Firms Interviewed</u>	<u>Total Employees</u>	<u>Manual/Staff</u>		<u>Male/Female</u>		<u>Part-Time</u>
Lucas	8,000	5,000	3,000	4,000	4,000	2,000
Raybone Chesterman (Hand Tool manufacturers)	600	456	144	340	260	96
C.W. Cheney (Lock manufacturers)	587	487	71	183	386	20
Concentric (Pressed products)	400	340	60	260	140	18

The firms chosen were selected because they employed, or had employed, the largest number of the women included in the Rex and Tomlinson survey. Fairly structured interviews, lasting approximately one hour, were conducted and notes taken in shorthand. The results of this survey will be considered in the context of employment figures for Birmingham and the West Midlands.

Structure of the Local Labour Market

Employment in the West Midlands has traditionally been concentrated in metal based manufacturing, which is heavily dependent on the car industry. However, although this sector still remains an important source of work (in 1975 50 per cent of employed men and 26 per cent of employed women worked in this sector) the number of jobs provided by manufacturing industries has decreased in recent years while the importance of the service, administration, health and education sectors has increased and between 1959 and 1975 they provided an additional 15,000 jobs (West Midlands County Council, Tables 4 and 5). The growth in these sectors has important implications for female employment since a high proportion of employees are women (in 1975 45 per cent of women in the

West Midlands worked in these sectors compared with 17 per cent of men (W.M.C.C. Table 4). Indeed the increasing importance of the service, administration, education and health sectors has corresponded with a steady growth in the proportion of married women, in the West Midlands, working and this proportion has consistently been above the national average:

TABLE 9:14

Economic Activity Rates, Population aged 15 and over

Married Women	1961	1966	1971	1976*
West Midlands County%	32.7	44.5	46.5	47.3
Great Britain	31.9	38.0	42.2	n/a
Ratio of West Midlands:C.B.	1.260	1.108	1.096	

*West Midlands County Household Survey, aged 16 and over

Source: Census of Population, 1961, 1966, 1977 in West Midlands County Council, Table 2.

Despite the high proportion of economically active married women in the West Midlands they are not spread evenly throughout the occupational structure, but rather are concentrated in semi-skilled manual and clerical work:

TABLE 9:15

Occupational Structure, West Midlands County

	Males %	Females %
Skilled manual	42.3	7.3
Semi-skilled manual	18.9	27.6
Unskilled manual	6.3	9.9
Professional	10.4	11.0
Managers and Administrators	6.5	0.8
Other non-manual (mainly clerical)	15.4	43.3

Source: Household Survey, December 1976 in West Midlands County Council, Table 3c

Moreover, in addition to sexual divisions, race differences are also apparent in the West Midlands labour market and Rex and Tomlinson found that:

"Amongst women, 26.9 per cent of the general population are clerical workers and 20.15 per cent in service industries, with engineering and allied trades third in importance at 13.7 per cent. Amongst New Commonwealth women on the other hand, 27.1 per cent were in engineering and allied trades, 16.3 per cent in professional and technical trades and only 12 per cent in service trades. It would seem therefore that whereas the white woman typically becomes a secretary or a shop-worker the immigrant woman works in a factory, or in a hospital, and rather less frequently in service industries" (p.107)

The overall pattern of sex and race differences within the labour structure of the West Midlands is also evident in a breakdown of the type of work performed by a sample of mothers living in the Handsworth area. The Table below shows the high concentration of both black and white women in factory work and all of these jobs are unskilled or semi-skilled. However, as Rex and Tomlinson, noted black women are even more concentrated in factory work and in the health service while being under-represented in office work and service industries (particularly shop work):

TABLE 9:16

Employment, current or last, of a Sample of Women under 45 years of age Living in the Survey Area

	% of black women	Number	% of white women	Number
Factory Work	43	88/202	29	20/68
Services and Distribution (Cleaning, catering and shop work)	29	59/202	36	24/68
Office Work	2	4/202	23	16/68
Nursing/Auxiliary	25	51/202	-	-

Source: Interviews conducted in 1976 by National Opinion Poll for Rex and Tomlinson

This concentration of women in unskilled and semi-skilled repetitive work was also confirmed by the employment survey I undertook in May 1978.

The results of this survey indicated that both applicants for jobs and employers are aware that some jobs are 'women's work' and are prepared to accept rigid sexual divisions. Thus of 159 applicants for office work only seven were men, similarly of 53 applicants for shop jobs three were men, and only six men were included in the 121 applicants for cleaning jobs. In the case of a vacancy for a 'B/Operative' apparently a few men applied not realising the abbreviation stood for 'Bingo' and "when you get men who ring up, when they find out what it is they usually say 'oh it's women that do that sort of work' and ring off." Similarly, the three men who telephoned in response to an advertisement for a Hand and Power Press Operator probably did not realise that 'women are better workers on hand and power press because of aptitude ... They are quick and get a hold of boring jobs' and therefore men would only be appointed if there were no suitable female applicants. The firm that placed an advertisement for a Patrol Viewer is "still looking" because the three telephone calls they received were from men and "It's a peculiar job traditionally done by women, and although we're not allowed to discriminate it is females that do the job". Obviously the situation exists in reverse and when I enquired whether a firm had received any female applicants in response to an advertisement for Stumpers I was told 'It's a man's job'.

Since there is this selection process at the job application stage it comes as little surprise to find that in the actual factory situation women do the 'repetitive and boring' jobs. Women are the machinists, assemblers, viewers, clerk typists, etc.

Local Employers' Attitudes to (a) The Employment of Women

When asked why certain jobs are 'women's work' the employers I interviewed, like those in the surveys by Hunt and Chesterman (Ch. 2), frequently resorted to naturalistic explanations - "women are more nimble", "tend to be more patient", "the bottle neck jobs are done by men because they need physical strength". Indeed the fact that women are seen as more suited, and prepared to accept, the "monotonous and repetitive" jobs which are also the low paid jobs was mentioned by the employers as one of the major advantages of employing women. Moreover the reason why women will accept lower paid work than men was seen in terms of a woman's position as the dependant of a man and acceptance of the concept of 'the family wage' (See Ch. 1). Thus, when explaining why men do not apply for 'women's jobs' because they are lower paid, the Personnel Officer at Raybone Chesterman stated that "If a man gets a job he has a certain standard of living to maintain. A man earning £50 a week only takes home about £40. If a woman comes to work it's £30 extra". Certainly the average full-time wage for women workers in the West Midlands was less than the rate for men and slightly below the female national average:

TABLE 9:17

Average Weekly Earnings for Full-Time Employees, 1974

West Midlands	Great	Men	Women
West Midlands		£48.7	£26.6
Great Britain		£47.7	£26.9

Source: West Midlands County Council, p.14

Moreover, this discrepancy between the earnings of men and women remained even if comparable occupational groups are considered;

TABLE 9:18

Average Annual Earnings within the West Midlands by Broad Occupational Group
Males and Females Full-Time Employees, 1976.

<u>Occupational Group</u>	<u>Ave. Male Earnings</u> (£ p.a.)	<u>Ave. Female Earnings</u> (£ p.a.)
Skilled manual	2,996	1,702
Semi-skilled manual	2,800	1,822
Unskilled manual	2,510	1,690
Managerial	4,540	2,955
Professional	3,997	2,875
Other non-manual	3,179	1,923
All occupations	3,120	2,012

Source: Household Survey in West Midlands County Council, Table 15

The fact that women will accept monotonous and low paid work which men do not want might be an incentive for employers to perpetuate the assumption that a woman's paid work is secondary to her role in the home. However, because of the shortage of skilled labour, which was mentioned by all four Personnel Officers I interviewed, there was also an incentive for employers to encourage women to place more emphasis on their work role and to strive for advancement. Indeed both Lucas and Concentric had started recruiting female apprentices and were trying to encourage some of their semi-skilled women workers to train for skilled work. It appears, therefore, that even the prejudice that women are "Not engineering minded" can be pushed to one side when considering ways of rectifying the shortage of skilled labour.

Availability of jobs for Women Living in the Survey Area

One possible indication of competition for jobs is the unemployment level, and figures show that male and female unemployment in both Birmingham and the West Midlands was above the national average between 1970 and 1977 (with the exception of male unemployment in the W.M. in 1977) and that since 1977 Birmingham has continued to experience higher unemployment rates than the country as a whole.

TABLE 9:19

Male and Female Unemployment Rates (annual averages) by Local Area and County as a Percentage of Great Britain

	1955		1960		1965		1970		1975		1976		1977	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Birmingham	49	33	40	41	45	46	79	74	123	132	115	109	108	104
West Midlands	43	38	40	54	41	53	71	80	104	140	100	114	94	109

Source: Department of Employment in West Midlands County Council, Table 7

TABLE 9:20

Percentage Unemployment Rates for Great Britain, West Midlands and Birmingham Metropolitan District, 1976 - 1981

	<u>Great Britain</u>	<u>West Midlands</u>	<u>Birmingham</u>
1976	5.6	-	8.3
1977	6.0	5.8	7.9
1978	6.0	5.6	7.4
1979	5.6	5.5	7.3
1980	7.3	7.8	9.0
1981	11.3	13.7	-

Sources: Department of Employment, Employment Gazette, Tables 2, 2 and 2, 3 July 1982
 Alan and Gillian Haine (ed.) Abstract of Birmingham Statistics, No 22, Table 54, 1979-80

Female unemployment rates are, moreover, likely to be an underestimation of true unemployment among women because many do not register with the Department of Employment since they are often not entitled to unemployment benefit. Consequently, in order to assess demand for work among women, I conducted the newspaper survey described earlier in this Chapter. The results of the survey are shown in Table 9.21 and the conclusion which seems to emerge is that there is a consistently high level of demand for unskilled and semi-skilled jobs within travelling distance of Handsworth. Indeed the Personnel Officers interviewed at the four engineering firms confirmed that there is an abundance of unskilled and semi-skilled labour and none of these firms found it necessary to advertise such jobs, but rather relied on employees introducing their relatives, friends and neighbours. Vacancies for jobs requiring a skill or qualification (shorthand and nursing) seem more difficult to fill. All the part-time vacancies, except that for the bingo operator, received a high response rate (8 - 70).

An adequate supply of labour for 'women's work' obviously has implications for working mothers. In the first place they may be competing with childless women for jobs and, secondly, firms have no incentive to provide facilities which would ease the situation of working mothers and which may be considered in times of labour shortage to encourage more women to work (see Chapter 3).

Attitudes to (b) The Employment of Black, White and Asian Mothers of Pre-School Children, (c) The Provision of Child Care Facilities and (d) Part-Time Labour

(b) It is difficult to assess the attitudes of the four employers interviewed towards the employment of mothers of pre-school children since only one of the Personnel Officers (R. Pybne Chesterman) specifically asked women applicants about their family responsibilities. The Personnel Officers were therefore unable to compare

TABLE 9-21 Results of Newspaper Survey

<u>Job Advertised</u>	<u>Number of vacancies</u>	<u>Number of applicants</u>	<u>Comments</u>
FACTORY WORK (f.t.)			
Capstan Operator	1	50-60	
Hand & Power Press Operator	1	10	After 10 applicants callers were told the vacancy was filled.
Process Workers Assembler	1	18-26	
Patrol Viewer	1	3 men	
Polisher (jewellery trade)	5	3-10	Polishing is considered undesirable because it is dirty.
Machinist	2	8 & 40	The vacancy which elicited 8 applicants was only temp. over the summer.
SERVICES			
Cleaning (p.t.)	7	12-30	
Catering (including bar staff)	2	15-20 & 70	The vacancy which elicited 70 applicants was part-time.
Shop Work	4	15-20	One of the jobs was p.t.
Bingo Operator (p.t.)	1	5	
OFFICE WORK (f.t.)			
Secretary	7	0-4	Six jobs which required shorthand received 0-4 applicants. 20 applicants were received for the one job for an audio typist.
Clerks	6	3-24	Those which required typing received more applicants.
Part-Time Office Work	7	8-12 & 40	
NURSING	3	0, 3 & 7	The 2 vacancies with the lowest response were for Staff Nurses

the work performance of childless women and mothers. However, they had formed impressions of the relative merits of white, Asian and West Indian workers. Generally Asian workers were considered more placid and two Personnel Officers mentioned that Asian mothers tend to return to work immediately after having a baby. West Indian workers on the other hand did not have "a good reputation" at two of the firms interviewed, where they were considered extrovert and flamboyant with a tendency to "gang together". The Personnel Officer at Concentric thought it important to keep a racial balance since "West Indians are excitable, still have Community Headmen ... (and yet) I think if we had a very high proportion of Asians there would be more trouble. West Indians are more clever, more astute, they think for themselves ... they are individuals. Asians tend to follow, they are easily manipulated. An all Asian workforce would be open to manipulation."

(c) On the question of child care facilities the firms I interviewed agreed that they would only consider providing facilities "if there was a shortage of labour for women's-type work", "if the labour situation was very tight - no other way of attracting labour" and that "firms only provide facilities if they have difficulty in attracting labour". Consequently, with the high demand for 'women's work', all rejected the idea of providing facilities at the time of the interviews and Lucas was the only firm where "every so often the Union suggests" that child care facilities should be available.

(d) The employment of part-time labour was viewed very favourably by both Lucas and Raybone Chesterman because it is possible to "manipulate part-time workers more than full-time workers". As Hunt and Chesterman found in their surveys of part-time employment (See Ch. 3) part-time workers in these firms are

recruited when production needs are great and laid off when production needs to be reduced. Indeed Lucas refers to the evening shifts (5.15 - 9 p.m., 6 - 9 p.m. and 6 - 10 p.m.) as the 'buffer shifts' which 'go first in a recession' because it is 'more important to support full-time rather than part-time staff' and the women employed on these 'buffer shifts' are only 'taken on for three months at a time'. 'Fluctuations are covered by the buffer shift'. Similarly two of the three departments operating twilight shifts, which were introduced in the 1960s, at Raybone Chesterman ended in July because they 'haven't got the orders'. Another advantage of part-time workers, stated by Lucas, was that they 'do a job between certain hours, don't see themselves as part of the factory organization (and are therefore) less trouble and less militant. They do their work, we pay them, they don't make trouble and they are easy to recruit'. Furthermore 'absentee rate is less (among part-timers) than full-time women workers because married women tend to work part-time because they have been able to do something with the family. The husband is there in the evening if the children are sick. Full-timers have to take time off to look after their children.'

In contrast to the attitude of these two firms, however, Concentric and C.W. Cheney did not think it was to their advantage to employ part-time workers particularly since the Employment Protection Act. In their view part-time workers were as expensive to employ as full-time labour and Concentric believed that they are 'difficult to control and need supervision'. Rather than employing part-time women workers Concentric tended to employ male pensioners on a part-time basis to sweep the shop floor etc., and C.W. Cheney had reduced its part-time labour force to 20 since full-time labour had become more readily available.

Child Care Provision and Employment Opportunities in the Survey Area

Women with children in the survey area suffered similar restrictions on their choice of employment as women nationally. Child care facilities in the area were inadequate and day nursery places were reserved for 'priority' children. The structure of the West Midlands labour market reflected national patterns, in that women were concentrated in low paid and low skilled jobs. Local employers expressed similar attitudes towards women workers, the provision of child care facilities and part-time employment as those employers interviewed in Hunt's survey (See Ch. 3). However differences were also evident.

Birmingham Social Services Committee was even more rigorous than other Local Authorities in its enforcement of the notion that day nurseries are a privilege to be reserved for children who are defined as 'deprived' in some way, and that 'abuse' of the provision should be strictly controlled. Little attempt was made to cater for the needs of the high proportion of black and Asian children.

Although the local employment structure reflected national patterns a much higher proportion of women workers in the West Midlands were concentrated in manufacturing compared to women nationally (25.9 per cent compared with 9.1 per cent). The recession in this sector is therefore significant for women workers, particularly those working part-time since part-timers are often only employed when there is a shortage of full-time labour, or for a boost in production. Any decline in the manufacturing sector is also likely to affect West Indian and Asian women particularly since a higher proportion of these women are concentrated in this employment.

One result of inadequate child care facilities and competition for part-time jobs is that homework may be the only employment option available for some women. Also, the high proportion of Asian women in the survey area is likely to increase demand for homework since cultural factors often prevent them working outside the home. Certainly the evidence suggested a high demand for homework in the survey area. (Researchers in Handsworth and Saltley were frequently approached by women in the hope of obtaining work at home and an advertisement by a woman wanting homework elicited responses from women in a similar position, rather than from employers.) How child care provision and employment opportunities are viewed and experienced by a sample of women in Handsworth is considered in Chapters 10 and 11.

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CHAPTER 10

PERCEPTION OF THE ROLES OF WIFE AND MOTHER

A major aim of this research was to ascertain the extent to which cultural differences in the interpretation of gender roles, and the ideology of parentcraft and child care, influence women's perception and experience of paid work. The predominant assumption in Britain is that a woman's primary role is that of wife and mother. How did my respondents perceive marriage and motherhood? I wanted to know whether the women themselves viewed the roles of wife and mother as the ultimate and inevitable ambition of women. Did they in fact perceive an alternative? Why marriage? Why motherhood? How did my respondents define the role of women? And, more specifically, what are the characteristics of a 'good' wife, and how did the respondents define a 'good' mother? Did the three groups of women accept the predominant ideology in Britain which states that mothers should assume almost total responsibility for the care of their pre-school child? What were my respondents' feelings about, and experience of, child care provision? And, finally, what was it like, both physically and emotionally, for those mothers who combined the roles of paid worker and domestic labourer?

1.

REASONS FOR MARRIAGE

Implications of marriage for women

Marriage for women invariably involves taking responsibility not only for their own domestic labour but also responsibility for their husband's. Of the respondents who answered the question 'Generally do you think women work as hard, harder, or not so hard as their husbands?' the majority felt women work harder. Among the West Indian women interviewed 11 of the 18 married respondents

thought women work harder and all of the single West Indian mothers responded in this way. Eleven of the 16 white respondents agreed that women work harder than their husbands and this response was elicited from eight of the 15 Asian women interviewed. Only three respondents (all Asian) thought husbands generally work harder than their wives.

"... I think women work harder because they're a lot of jobs what women do, you know. Like if my husband gone out for a drink at the weekend and I stay in the house you'll sit in the house and find something to do, you know. You never sit down, you never sit down and think 'there's that to do but I'll wait until he comes in to help'. You wouldn't do that, you know." (14:9, W.I., married, working)

"When you're here in the house doing a lot of work you find you're tired but you cant stop ... When you're at work you have time off - you know, lunch and you have a break. (At home) you just keep going on. Housework is very hard." (12:6, W.I., single, not working)

"I think women work hard because I know some days I go out to work and I come in and start all over again, you know. I never stop. And at night you go to bed at the same time and you wake up tomorrow morning the same time. You both go out and when the both of you come in again it's not both of you that got to start all over. It's usually the woman that got to start again, you see, while the man put his feet up." (39:4, W.I., married, working)

"Well the husband when he finished his job he finished. But I think a woman's job is going, especially if she's got a job outside, you know. I think there's quite a lot to do in the house, especially if you're working in the evenings. You've got the house to do in the day and go out again. I think women do more cos a man when he's finished his eight hours shift, whatever he does, that's it for him but a woman's job is going all through the day, and if she's got young kids at night as well." (28:7, W.I., married, working)

"Harder, a woman works harder. Cos a man goes to work every morning, he comes in about 5 o'clock and he can sit down and relax while a woman gets up and she dont really sit down cos there's always something to do. I think they work harder." (2:7, white, not working)

"... Harder, they work longer hours if you include the getting up time. A woman is usually working from very early. She's the one usually that gets the family up, washed and dressed and nagged till they get out on time. And she's working at home, working through the rest of the day. I mean I'm not usually sitting down at this time in the afternoon ----- I rarely do until tea and then I'm lucky because my husband clears the dishes, washes and dries and puts them away." (5:10, white, working)

"I think women work twice as hard as their husbands ... Our society ... doesn't provide any facilities so that the woman is left doing the housework, bringing up the children, shopping ... Whenever any adverts come on television it is always the woman who is doing the shopping." (So even if they don't work outside the home do you think that women work harder?) "Yes because there is no time limit. It's 24 hours ... I really think that she's got no production at all. She's got no independence. She's got no job security. If she's sick ... there's no-one to look after her." (1:8, married, white, working)

"They (women) do work harder than their husbands. They (men) just work outside. Women work outside and inside as well." (41:4 Asian, married, homemaker)

Moreover, in addition to creating more physical labour for women, marriage frequently severely restricts a woman's freedom. This was seen, by the West Indian respondents, particularly in terms of not going out socially and was contrasted with the husband's continuing freedom. Among the Asian women marriage was seen in terms of imposing responsibilities on the woman and this was contrasted with the freedom from responsibilities which they had enjoyed prior to marriage. Moreover, as will be discussed later, many Asian respondents believed that a 'good' wife obeys her husband and a number who wanted to work did not because their husband disapproved.

"You're not able to do what you want to do because before I was married I was able to do what I liked but now I'm married I have to ask and it's not fair ... I think women get a worse deal, yes. They're always tied, the women, even if they haven't got children." (13:8/12, W.I., married)

"... Once you're settled with kids you got no freedom. Men still do, you know. He goes out with who he wants to and you're left to look after the kids. I'm sure every mother feels this." (34:13, W.I., divorced)

"... He can go out when he feels like it but you cant." (Why's that?) "Oh well you're the woman. You should stop in I suppose ... You know, you shouldn't be going one way and he's the other way, you know. It should be either both of you or him (laughs)." (39:2, W.I., married)

"I think a man can more or less please himself as regards going out, you know. I think they can just go out and a woman cant. She's tied with the children." (11:7, white, married)

"... You have to consult about everything ... If you want to go out you have to consult and arrange. You cant just say 'well I fancy going there, I'm going'." (5:9, white, married)

"I think I happy before. Before the marriage I would say I was happier" (Why do you think that is?) "Because when you get married you have all sort of worries, you know what I mean. Before you just like a child. You don't worry about everything ... You have kids and marry, it make you worry, that what I think." (65:5, Asian, married)

"When you married you have more worries. All kinds of worries, like about the children." (59:2, Asian, married)

"Married --- I was stuck at home with parents - I'm stuck here as well. I don't know what's the difference. I think you have more problem when you married really. When you're free you have no problems. When you married you have more problems' (In what sort of way?) "Well you people move out and have your own house but we have to stay with our parents. More problems there ... Men they have a free life you see. It doesn't make any difference to them whether they're married or not." (11:5, Asian, married)

Desire for marriage

Despite the fact that marriage for women invariably involves an increase in domestic labour and responsibilities and a decrease in freedom and independence, however, the majority of respondents are married or desire marriage. Among the West Indian respondents 19 are married, one is divorced, ten are single and

living alone and two are living with men. Ten of the white women interviewed are married, one is divorced, another separated, two are cohabiting and two are single and living alone. All the Asian respondents are married. Of the 12 single black respondents seven would like to marry and one of the four single white women desires marriage. The majority of West Indian and white respondents questioned (38/44) did not think that all women want to get married, although the Asian women interviewed could see no alternative to marriage. When asked what they felt were the reasons why women did not want to marry the most common response was that some women prefer a career and want freedom without responsibilities.

With the exception of the Asian respondents whose marriages were arranged by their parents, the majority of the women interviewed did not feel that their parents encouraged them to get married. Indeed only two of the white respondents and 12 of the West Indian women interviewed felt their parents had encouraged marriage. Thus, the majority of West Indian and white respondents, at least in retrospect, did not perceive marriage as the only option available to women and did not experience overt pressure from their parents to marry. Moreover, in response to the question 'If you could be a wife or a mother, but not both, which would you choose?' the majority of respondents chose motherhood:

	Wife	Mother	Both	Neither
West Indian, married	1	7	6	1
West Indian, single	1	5	4	1
White	2	9	5	-

During the course of the interviews an attempt was made to isolate the reasons why the majority of respondents had married or do desire marriage.

West Indian Respondents

Advantages of marriage

In answer to questions about the advantages of marriage and the difference between living with a man and marriage the most consistent responses among the West Indian respondents were that marriage is respectable and provides security. Among the black married/divorced women interviewed only one did not mention the respectability of marriage as a positive advantage.

(Do you see advantages of being married?)

"----- You're not common, you couldn't be common, you know." (4:5)

"Well I think marrying is a more respectable life. I think it's respectable life, you know, more than living like that (cohabiting), you know." (14:5)

"It (marriage) is, it is more respectable. Oh yes, that's what I believe anyway. It's far more respectable." (27:2)

"----- Well people don't look at you funny, you know. As soon as they know you're married oh everything's alright. But if they know you're not married they turn their nose up - they think 'Oh she should have known better' and things like that." (13:8)

"----- Some people, these young girls today, don't think it's (cohabiting) wrong, that it really matters. But it does because um --- people, people have got more respect for you, you know, especially ... if you got pregnant and --- you're married it shows more respect." (19:8)

"I think I would get married if I got the right person, I still would." (Why's that?) "I don't know. A decent life I suppose. Sort of decent life." (34:5)

"... It was only because I had the extra one (baby) and I didn't want to be in hospital without being married else I would have stayed single." (33:9)

"No I never really want to marry so, you know ---- quickly but I have the kids, you know ----- and then the other people them said 'no bastard kids', you know. They don't want any bastard kids and them they want me to marry. That's why I say I marry but I never really want to ----

"They said having kids I have to get married so I just make up my mind." (8:6)

(What do you see as the advantages of being married?)
 "----- Well I think it's better for the children because I was worried, I was getting worried about them really. At school ... you feel a bit difficult sometimes. I don't know it's ----- I felt a little bit ashamed you know. It depends on where I was or, you know, what sort of things was around me and what type of people I was with you know (laughs) but at some stage I used to feel really embarrassed." (So do you think that's the major advantage of marriage?)
 " (laughs) I suppose so. Why do women get married? I suppose it's what society, it's what is expected of women in society. They just do it because it is the fashion you know ... To live together in sin, and it was accepted in society, it would be the same thing you know but it's not accepted. You only have to put a ring on your finger - you don't have to say you're married - they see you differently then." (29:8/9)

The above quotes demonstrate that there are two aspects to the concept of respectability. Firstly, an internalised belief by the woman that marriage is actually more respectable and, secondly, external pressures to conform to a societal definition of what is acceptable. The notion of respectability was also mentioned by five of the single West Indian mothers:

"I think it's most respectable when you're married and you have the children." (12:5)

"Well, if you get married it's nice to be called Mrs. (laughs)." (Do you think people would treat you differently then?) "Well yeh in a way they would. I think people when young girl marry ... you have more security, you know. but if you're not married then everyone say 'Oh she's just'." (Do you think it's more respectable?) "It is in a way, that's how I look at it." (1:13)

As indicated by the last quote, the notion of security and of possessing a man was also a predominant reason for marriage isolated by the West Indian respondents. The emphasis was on having a hold on a man, and only one respondent recognized that freedom for the woman to leave could possibly be advantageous.

Eleven of the married, and three single, black women interviewed mentioned security as an advantage of marriage.

(Other than being more respectable, what do you see as the advantages of being married?) "Sometimes like having a boyfriend it don't look as if it's yours, it could be anyone's. But married you know it's definitely your husband, he's yours. But just have a boyfriend he could walk out ... Your husband could walk out on you anyway but you don't sure of him (boyfriend) as how you're sure of your husband." (6:6)

"It's more secure. Before, I know as I say you could do what you liked but still that wasn't it. You wanted someone you could hold onto and you know you could trust. Cos I mean if you're living with someone they can still go off so it's best to be sure. If they go off when you're married that's different because at least you can say you was married." (13:8)

(What do you think are the advantages of being married?) "Hum, I've never looked at the advantages (laughs)." (So what are the things you like best about being married?) "Well you've got a man of your own, you know. Well nobody can come in and say he's theirs. You know what I mean. You can always say he's yours and things like that." (39:2)

(Do you think there's a difference between living with a man and being married to him?) "It could be a difference there because you cant hold onto him. You cant hold, he can slip any minute you know. Just one little thing he dissatisfy and he's gone. You know he might see another lady and that probably better looking and have more personality and he be gone." (Do you think there's more security being married?) "Yeh it's more secure." (18:7)

"----- If you are married to a man and anything goes wrong he's responsible you know ----- If death or anything comes between you there's somebody to stand up for you. If you get pregnant or anything like that. But with single girls and men they just have one here and there. You know half the girls are left with three or four kids with different daddies." (4:5)

"... When you're married to him, you know, he cant leave ... If he have a girl you can talk him 'I'm your wife'. But I mean if you live with him he can do what he like ----- like that. And when you have quarrel and thing he can say 'you dont own me, you not even me wife' and you dont know what to do." (9:4)

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Respectability and security were the predominant advantages of marriage mentioned by the West Indian respondents, and particularly among the married black women the consistency in responses was remarkable. Other advantages of marriage isolated by the respondents were that children need a permanent father particularly because a man is more able to discipline a child than a woman.

(Perception of the role of a father is covered in a later section)

'Without a man in the house ----- I can't see how they (children) can come up right. I don't care how hard you try ... You know woman they (children) think you are soft, you know ----- If you notice most of these things there isn't a man in the house, the children are always running loose, they are always on the street and things like that.'

(39:2)

White Respondents

Why marry?

Answers, from the white respondents, to questions about why they married/wish to marry and their perception of the advantages of marriage were more vague and diffuse than responses from the West Indian women. Thus when asked why she married one woman had felt 'marriage is a bed of roses and then ... from experience decided "I don't think I'd get married again, I don't think I would. The only thing is with the children you know. I suppose it's best to be married for the children." (11:6) Similarly, an unmarried mother felt "I'd like to be married but I don't know why." (2:1) Four of the white respondents mentioned the notion of respectability as applied to marriage, but two of these felt it in terms of more easily obtaining societal recognition and social status:

'----- Secure and respectable in the sense that - not in the moral way - when you're shopping, and you're meeting people. When you have to deal with business or anything, when you're Mr. and Mrs. people tend to take more notice, take an interest, and take you seriously. But when you're somebody's bit it's a different thing. It doesn't make any difference to me ----- I mean as regards our

relationship being married or not being married but it makes a difference to other people. As individuals it doesn't bother me. If society ... was completely the same, if everybody in society thought the same way there wouldn't be problems but because life isn't that ---- clean cut, you have to do ----- what's necessary really." (23:10)

"----- Well at one time I could have thought of a lot of advantages but now I'm not so sure. Um, other than the basic one that perhaps a woman doesn't have to fight so hard for social status. I know a woman that's got a job and um, she's a single mum and there's quite a lot of suspicion about, you know, is she flighty or reliable, this sort of thing ... There's less of a struggle against other peoples' opinion against you." (1:2)

However, as the previous woman goes on to point out, marriage may confer a degree of status on the woman but nevertheless she is still considered secondary to her husband:

"..... He's treated as the boss, he's treated as the head of the family even when he's not. There's this for the husband; the wife and mother is almost treated as a second class citizen, almost. Um ---- you know people don't want to talk to her if they know she's married, they want to talk to her husband and her husband is made to feel great, you know." (1:2)

Thus, in contrast to the West Indian respondents, only a small proportion of the white women interviewed identified marriage as respectable. Indeed in answer to the question 'Do you think marriage is more respectable than living with a man?' one woman replied "I don't hear it. I don't hear people talk like that" (31:5) and four other respondents thought there is no difference between the two situations, or that cohabitation is preferable. Moreover, on the subject of security, which was mentioned by ten respondents, only five thought it advantageous:

'(Living together) ----- It's all very well but what if the man walks off, because he's not legally obliged to stay ---- to stay with you. I know there's some security in that you can get some money from him but there are some people that just run off and you're stuck. Having a baby shouldn't be like that ... they should be part of a stable relationship ---- to extend the family circle." (5:8)

'Especially if you've got a baby and you're living with your boyfriend, you know, he can leave you any time. If you're married it's a bit more secure.' (44:6)

The remaining five respondents, however, thought it preferable to live with a man because in that situation the woman is more able to retain her freedom and independence:

'... I think you're happier when you live with them than when you get married ... You tend to belong to each other (if married) whereas if you're not married you can do what you want when you want, you know, your freedom. You still have your freedom." (35:5, married)

(Would you like to marry him again?) "I'd never marry him, never I know he would marry me if I wanted to get married ... but you see I think there are more disadvantages than advantages ... You see I'm my own gaffer. I can move out of here any time I want. The house is between the two of us - I just sell, sell the house, take my half and just go." (32:13, divorced but living with ex-husband)

"Oh I don't think I'd get married now. No I think I'd rather just live with somebody. If you argue and that you can just walk out or tell your boyfriend to get out but when you're married you can't do that, it's not as easy. So I'd rather live with someone." (3:5, single)

Thus, unlike the West Indian respondents, only a small proportion of the white women interviewed isolated security and respectability as major advantages of marriage. Indeed, many of the white respondents had difficulty in thinking of any advantages of marriage. However, as with the black women, the belief that children need a permanent father was mentioned, as was companionship.

In the main, however, marriage was something that had just happened and even in retrospect many of the respondents could not identify why they had married or what advantages it offered:

"... I was engaged but I couldn't see me ever getting married to this fellow. I don't even know how I managed to get engaged to him. It was sort of mom and Ted, it wasn't me. I liked Ted ... He was ready to get married. He got engaged to get married, and I got engaged ---- for a quiet life really. I just would have liked a nice friend, nothing serious." (32:12)

As the last quote illustrates, and previous quotes have implied, marriage is perceived as the ultimate relationship, "a proper relationship" which confers the status of wife rather than "his bit". Thus, if the woman likes a man a progression to marriage seemed inevitable.

Asian Respondents

Inevitability of marriage

As to why all the Asian women are married the answer appears to be that there is simply no option available:

"It's the main thing in India that when the girls grow up they have to get married. It's like a responsibility for parents." (23:2)

"In India it's the traditional thing." (77)

"When you get married you've got more responsibilities, more things. But if you don't get married ... you have to stay with your parents and in my time you couldn't even go to work." (20:5)

There is no place in Asian society for the unmarried woman and, as the above respondent stated, it is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their daughters marry. Indeed all the Asian respondents had had their marriages arranged by their parents although one had a very limited degree of choice:

"I had a month to go out with him when I was in India. I went September, I came back January and in between that time I met him and I got engaged ... It was arranged but I had my choice. They let me talk to him and that. They said to me if I like him - cos if I didn't I was allowed to say 'no'." (So do you think arranged marriages are a good thing?) "Well I like it because at least I had a choice. Because some places you don't see him. Some castes they don't see their husband until actually after they're married. I think I would like to know what he looks like and personality." (29:2)

Only one Asian respondent disapproved of arranged marriages, another three did not know whether or not they would arrange their childrens' marriages. In general, however, the system was considered satisfactory because "if you're happy with your parents they will choose nicely for you. You only have one husband all life. I don't like people marrying without asking parents." (44:3)

Those Asian respondents asked about cohabitation and unmarried motherhood thought them highly immoral.

Reasons for Marriage

Although a majority of respondents of all three racial groups are married or desire marriage, despite recognising the increase in domestic labour and restriction on a woman's freedom that marriage often entails, there were variations in the way the three groups of women responded to questions about their motivation for marriage.

It is significant that all the Asian respondents are married. As Chapter 6 describes, there is no place in Asian society for an unattached woman: women do not exist in their own right but only in relation to kin. Thus it is not surprising that the Asian respondents had difficulty isolating the advantages of marriage - marriage is simply inevitable, there is no alternative.

Although the white respondents also found it problematic to identify why they had married, or desire marriage, the tone of their responses was different. Thus, although marriage was frequently perceived as something that "just happened" the degree of inevitability was not as intense as amongst the Asian women and indeed some white respondents found the alternative of cohabitation preferable - this is not an option for Asian women.

Unlike the Asian and white respondents, the West Indian women interviewed readily isolated what they perceived as the major advantages of marriage, and responded with a limited, consistent range of answers. The emphasis placed on respectability as an advantage of marriage reflects the situation in Jamaica (see Chapter 5) where a wife is accorded more respect than a woman cohabiting with a man and marriage is associated with the middle and upper classes.

It is interesting to note that all three groups of respondents mentioned a child's need for a stable relationship with his/her father as a positive aspect of marriage.

2. REASONS FOR MOTHERHOOD - USE OF CONTRACEPTION

Motherhood imposes severe restrictions on a woman's job opportunities both in terms of practical constraints and the emotional conflict between the role of mother and wage worker.

It was therefore felt necessary to question why the women interviewed had children; whether or not it had been a definite decision.

West Indian Respondents

Perception of illegitimacy

Although much of the literature (e.g. Clarke, 1966; Henriques, 1953) suggests that fear of sterility, motherhood as a sign of maturity, and acceptance of

Illegitimacy motivates single West Indian women to have children these factors were rarely expressed by the black women interviewed in Handsworth.

A significant proportion of West Indian respondents had conceived outside of marriage (18/31) but only two mentioned that they had been worried about sterility:

'Well I always wanted to have a kid when I was 17, coming onto 18, and I said I don't mind whatever it is I'll have it and I was very happy when I had Anthony ... I didn't really plan it but I just feel that way that I want to have a kid to make sure that I can have kids later on in life. I can still have kids, you see.' (40:9)

'I always think I couldn't have a child.' (And did that worry you?) 'Yes'

Indeed, in response to the question 'did you feel sorry for, or a bit jealous of, girls who had babies without being married?' the majority of West Indian women interviewed felt sorry for them, although several thought the situation was easier now:

'We always feel sorry for them because their life wasn't very happy, you know, always unhappiness. The parents would sort of ---- ignore them because the way they wanted them to be they weren't you see they make them be ashamed and so on. If they had been married then and had the children they don't mind but they go out and have illegitimate children and that let them down you know and the parents are angry. So you always feel sorry for them because they are uncomfortable. Not like how these have an easy life, mother will take it in and care - Oh no our parents are different.' (18:6)

'Oh I don't think I'd be jealous. I think I would feel sorry for them ... In those days it's not like now, you know, it's sort of quickened up, but in those days I used to see even in my district girls that were out of school and working they go and get pregnant without get married. Their parents used to give them ever such a good hiding, you know, they used to get a good hiding all the time, they used to be at them. They'd run away and things like that, you know. You were scared in case it happen to you.' (27:2)

'I felt sorry for her because, as I say, in them times if you had a baby you were sort of talked about, you know. Sort of 'Oh she's a bad girl, she's had a baby and her mum has to look after it'.' (33:8)

The major reason why the respondents felt sympathetic towards women who had illegitimate children was because of unpleasant parental reaction. Among those respondents who did conceive outside of marriage the predominant response of parents was that of anger, although in some cases this subsided as time passed:

(And how did your mother react when you told her you were pregnant?) "She was very annoyed." (And did she get used to the idea?) "No not really. She rejected me (laughs)." (Do you think she felt ashamed?) "Yes, she did. She was so disappointed, she wanted me to be a nurse, get qualifications, do nursing first, you know. Moreover I was going out with someone who she didn't really want me to go out with and she just didn't want anything to come out of the affair. She didn't want us to get married for instance and when I got pregnant she was very disappointed." (29:8)

(How did your parents react?) "Was very angry ---- They wasn't there when I get pregnant. I don't think I could, I would (if they'd have been there). They would murder me! And they'd probably hit at my tummy, especially me dad - he still on about it, on about it sometimes when I go up there." (12:6)

"When I was six months pregnant with her I had the beating I could never forget (laughs). I mean never ever forget." (36:39)

(Were your parents angry?) "Yeh they were, you know ----- Things that they did to you you gotta be sorry ----- that you ever get yourself ----- if that way." (37:6)

(How did your parents react when you were pregnant?) "My mother gave me such a bash across the face I see these stars (laughs) I was 23 when I had Charlott." (And what about your dad, was he angry?) "He was very, very angry yeh ----- I think they were protecting us really cos all the boys and that used to come to our house ... and when the boys and men used to come ... we used to have to go up the blimming stairs. It used to drive us mad." (Did your parents encourage you to get married at all?) "Well I had to (laughs). They didn't encourage me, they just lay it down 'right what are you going to do about it?' and that was it ..." (33:8)

(And when you told your parents you were pregnant how did they react?) "Oh they didn't like it, they didn't like it but everything worked out smoothly after a bit because me mother was in Canada at the time. She went on holiday and I didn't tell her before she went and it was terrible when she came back. It was a shock, you know. She just accepted it, you've got to, you know. She saw that everything in the house was alright, you know, bought a lot of new things, you know, look after the baby and everything was alright." (13:7)

Thus, far from accepting illegitimacy, the majority of respondents experienced an adverse reaction, from their parents, to their pregnancy and only two women interviewed expressed a fear of sterility. Similarly, only five respondents had felt jealous when friends had conceived outside of marriage.

Views on family planning

Only two of all the West Indian mothers interviewed had planned any of their children. Indeed a sharp conflict is evident between a belief in family planning and the actual experience. Only five of the respondents were not totally in favour of family planning. One of the women did not know what she felt about planning children, and the responses of the other four are as follows.

(You never planned your children) 'No' (And do you think that's the best way or do you think you should plan them?) "Some people plan them and then when they want they can't get ----- So I think they should just have their kids and just finish, or stop themselves after two or three, or have what they want to have and stop. But planning, some people only have one and they say 'alright in another six years I will have the next one' and they never get anymore ----- because they say ---- the sperm is like an egg and when it's gone there is no more coming." (So do you agree with contraception?) "I don't agree with it." (Is that because you think it's harmful?) "It can, it can but I shouldn't think it should be right to stop (conception)." (7:9)

(Do you think it's important to plan children - to actually decide when you're going to have them, or how many?) "Yes, but sometime I think if you do that you never have any (laughs). You know if I was to plan them I'd never have any, I couldn't find the time." (29:12)

(Do you think it's important to plan children?)

'It is for some people but not for everyone I don't think it really matters.' (24:7)

'I don't think you should (plan), god planned for you. You're married and you leave yourself in god's hand and he do it for you, you know. You say 'well I'm young and I just get married and I have to get a career, or get a certain amount of money, or a house, or set myself before I start my family' and then when you start the family there is no children because they're past. Could be you were having two and it's gone, so what do you do, you know. Unless you really leave it to the lord and you have your children you might not be able to have any.' (So you don't believe in contraception?) 'Well I have to do something to sort of ----- you know I've got to look after the others ----- It's not that I don't believe, but for the first stage, you don't know what going to happen. So you have it, you let god give it to you, there and then and then you have your children, and then you feel 'I don't think I can cope with more so lord help me what I must do'. You think of something and you ask your doctor's advice and you get something if you want a space I don't believe in space really, have it and then you stop. Rather than have two, stop, have another two, stop and then stop ... I ask the lord to help me.'

'I got a coll but my husband doesn't know. He's not interested. He says 'man don't give life, god gives and you should appreciate what happen'. But, on the other hand, I suffered. I'm very ill, I'm ill from when I get it (conception) to when I put it down (give birth). You know, I'm sick, morning sickness and sickness during the day. Bad feelings all the time so I can't go to church, I can't go out. I go to the clinic, I gotta run back because I've been sick on the way sometimes. It's not that I don't want it but to look after these I've just got to give myself a break ---- you need strength, you see, so I carry on. If I die leaving them, nobody to look after them.' (But your husband would be annoyed if he know you had a coll?) 'He would be annoyed. He don't believe in it but he don't mind if he don't have any more but if god does it. So he don't mind if we don't have any more but if the lord do it.' (18:12/13)

Among the remainder of respondents who felt it is important to plan children the most common reason expressed was financial. Others felt it is important because the mother needs space between childbirth, it is not fair to have an unwanted child, because of career or because the father may not support you:

"I think it's alright if you've got enough money to keep them but otherwise it's best if they're planned really. You know I don't believe in people having a lot of children and can't afford to keep them because children are always wanting things and I think it makes them sad if they can't afford them." (27:6)

"I don't know, I never planned these two (laughs), they just come along I don't think I would have had these two if I could sort of live my life over - not then - I would have done something first like ----- Like a young couple now, like, I think they're better off planning. If they have a house, buy the house and get the furniture in because I mean a baby can be very expensive, you know, if one of you have to give up work, you know ... So I think it's probably best to plan really, for a while anyway, till you know that you've got what you want like and then you can maybe just settle down and maybe you can give up work without having to worry about the bills that have gotta be paid and all that." (20:17)

"You must have a bit of a space inbetween, so you can't have them every year or every minute (laughs)." (19:12)

"Sometime if a mother want four and she get five but she didn't really want an extra one she might not love him the same as the other four what she want, like that one might suffer really, the extra one might suffer. I mean I don't want any more children. I didn't really want to have any children, not really Really I like to go out, meet my friends so I don't like to, you know, let the children think they're neglected. I didn't really want to have any but he just happened." (10:7)

(Why do you think it's important to plan children?)

"Well I mean to say with me now, I had the job at the beginning and, you know, I could have got a bit further into my nursing and then I could have had kids, you know, when I'd reached a bit higher, you know." (42:9)

"I wish I could come again. I wouldn't let a man look at me. I've had a lot of experience of men and they're no good - they run off for no reason, meet another woman and leave you with the kids. These sea men - I was engaged to one and he just left." (12:1)

You hear that the woman have a baby the man gone, left them, that is all men want, want you to have a baby and then leave. I wish that men could pregnant as well, get the bump out at the back! If they could feel the pain what we feel. Women look horrible sometime when they pregnant. Some men when their wife or girlfriend pregnant they try to be very understanding and let them rest but some of them, oh no they don't take them anywhere, just leave them in the house and gone out to enjoy themselves with somebody else -- --- But some men don't mind even if you sticking out every way ----- Some men just run off and leave you, then you have nowhere, nowhere to bring up the baby ----- not even a flat he could even leave you in to bring up your child into. Just leave you on the street like a tramp (10:5)

Since the majority of black respondents are in favour of family planning the question as to why only two had in fact planned their children arises. There appears to be two explanations; ignorance of sex, contraception and abortion and, secondly, reluctance to use contraception and opposition to abortion.

Ignorance of sex, contraception and abortion

The respondents' experience of sex education was extremely limited and confusing as the following quotes demonstrate:

"When you're in the West Indies you don't know anything about babies, or anything like that. Now I see on the telly four and five year olds go up to their parent and say 'Mummy where does baby come from?' and straight away she sit down and tell him everything, or the father sit down and he tell him everything. While in the West Indies it's 'oh get away child, get away from me, what do you want asking stuff like that for?' I think over here it's more open than in the West Indies. It's sort of, they keep it a dark secret, they keep it in, locked away or they say 'Father Christmas brought it, you know, over night while you was asleep'" (Do your parents in the West Indies tell you when you're older?) "They don't tell you anything! Even when you're older. Even when you reach the age of having periods they don't tell you. Cos ... I started when I was 16 and my mum she thought there was something wrong. She took me to the doctor and ask him and I says to her 'Mum why do you keep taking me to the doctor and he keeps doing these sort of things to me' and she says 'wait and you'll find out'. She don't tell me I was having a bath and I start to see all red coming from everywhere and I shouted for mum and she say ... 'Now you see for yourself' and

I say 'What is it?' and up till now she wont tell me. I had to find out from my friends you know I think it's better for them over here because in school they teach them. In the West Indies they don't tell you in school, not unless you reach secondary school and you're in about the fourth year - 16 going on 17, they start to tell you, but they don't tell you ... they sort of doing it like 'you're not to go with boys because you'll have babies, and you're not to do this' without telling you fully as they would over here.' (16:10/11)

(Did your mother ever tell you anything about sex?)
'She only tell me ----- not to do anything with boys.' (12:8)

(Did your mother ever tell you about sex at all?)
'No (laughs). You got to come up and learn it yourself. No she wouldn't. Even your perial she wouldn't tell you. When I first start mine I was in school and I ran home and said I'm to die because something burst inside me. That's the time she started telling me. Not like now now I would tell my little girl and they learn it in school. Nobody did tell us.' (How did you find out?) 'When it started and I been home and tell her what happen and then she start to tell me that have to happen, you know, in a woman.' (6:10)

(Did your mother tell you about sex at all?)
'No only about ----- boys not good, you must go to school and er ----- you know things like that - don't think about boys until I'm older. I really wasn't thinking of boys really --- I couldn't stand them ...' (10:8)

'Most West Indian parents they hide things from the children ---- they tell lies and things (sister: 'say babies come in helicopter') Then at the time it's a shock.' (9:7)

'Yes she tell us.' (She told you?) 'Oh yes, when you see your perial she tell you you've not to let anybody interfere with you because you'll have a baby so I had to be careful.' (17:10)

'They wont tell you nothing. It's over here I get to know all about it. I found out the hard way. I didn't know nothing. I remember when I was in this country mum said to me 'have you see your' - what was the word she used, she didn't say perial, she use another name - she said to me 'Have you started menstruating yet?' and I didn't know what she was on about The first time I see my period I didn't know what it was. I was 15. I said to me mum, I was frightened you know, I thought I'd cut myself or something, blood was all

over me and I went to her bedroom and I said to her 'look' and she said to me 'don't worry, pass me that bag over there'. I give her the bag and she give me this thing to put you know. She says to me 'put that on' and I said 'how can I put it on?'. She put it there. I didn't know. I feel really bad talking about it (laughs). It's embarrassing now, talking about I was 15 and I didn't know. They don't tell you nothing I didn't wear a bra either until I was about 16. They don't, they hide things from you. I don't know why. (1:21)

Indeed, until the birth of their first child, a number of the women interviewed did not understand about pregnancy, contraception or abortion:

'I didn't even know that I was pregnant to tell you the truth. When I went to the shop for this skirt my waist was only 24, cos I was only size 10 and then I was size 18 ... You know, and still I didn't know I was pregnant. I knew I didn't see my period for a couple of months but I didn't take it as nothing you know. I'd heard of getting pregnant, that's all, but I just didn't know how it happened (laughs). You could have said I was daft really but it wasn't my fault. It was my mum because she never tell me anything, you know. And when Keith said to me I was getting fat he did even have more sense than I cos he tell me he's taking me to the doctor and that's how I knew I was pregnant. People said 'oh you look fat' but I always said 'oh it's the good life'. I didn't know I was pregnant. It sounds silly now, you know.'

'I suppose I had no idea of it because I'm a girl like this. I didn't have friends. When I was working mum was very strict and it was from work to home, church to home, and I never usual go out. You know some girls they go there and there. I couldn't. And even when I met my boyfriend and take him home I couldn't stop out late. When we got engaged I got to be in the house before half eleven still, you know. I couldn't go out at all. My mum was very strict I didn't have much experience, or nothing. The experience I have is from him. He tell me what I didn't know. You know, so at the time I missed me periods I was dead to the world. I didn't think and that was it. So when I went to the doctor and he asked me when was the last time I see my period and I tell him, he said 'girl, you're pregnant' and I started crying He said 'Yes there's a little egg growing there alright' and I didn't know what he was on about this little egg growing, you know....' (1:22/11)

(Did your mother ever tell you anything about sex, or did you find out from friends, or ---?) "They never told us nothing." (So was it from friends?) "Just how I experience (laughs)." (Did you understand when you were pregnant?) "Well it was over here I expect my first baby, and I just feel weak, you know, and upsetting. I went to my doctor and he told me." (So you didn't realise you might be pregnant until the doctor told you?) "No" (7-8)

(About Contraception) "I didn't know at that time. I'd heard friends talk about precautions and stuff like that but I wasn't interested, you know." (16-2)

(About contraception) "When I had mine I was not in this country. I know nothing about them, you know. You'd just have children." (37-10)

(Did you consider with either baby having an abortion or having the baby adopted?)

"No. Well it did cross my mind but I knew nothing about it ... I mean for instance when I started my period I didn't know what it was. I mean ----- I mean I never knew anything about it or anything like that, you know. I was quite frightened (laughs). I was quite frightened you know cos I didn't know about it. It did cross my mind but ----- I didn't know anything about it myself ... I suppose I could have gone to my doctor but whatever I say to him she (mother), you know, find out so ----- and I probably was too scared. I did go to the welfare and they did talk to me about it but, you know, I was encouraged that it was best if I had the child and that was it." (36-13)

Views on contraception and abortion

Moreover, among those respondents who were aware of the different methods of contraception, only three did not express doubts about their safety and a number had found all methods totally unsatisfactory. Indeed several women had become pregnant because of the unpleasant side-effects of contraception:

"They don't agree with me. The only one I don't like is this sterilisation. I don't. It's irreversible, a permanent thing. Supposing anything should happen to me and he wants to get married again he couldn't have any children. And supposing anything happens to him and I want to get married again - although I don't think I would ever get married again - I couldn't have any children and that man you marry would feel

disappointed I should think ... We don't want any more babies and he think I should (use contraception but I've tried and they don't agree with me. I cant have the pill cos I'll get thrombosis and I have the coil and I take it out every so often and that's why I get this (pregnant). I take it out for three months and that's it. I cant have the cap cos she say I got a tilted womb, so I cant have that. So the only thing for me was sterilisation and when I wanted that they wouldn't do it. I had enough with Patricia because I had so much trouble I decided that I wanted it but they wouldn't do it because I was too young." (39:8)

I agree with it (contraception) but I wouldn't fancy it meself. I did for about three weeks and it really made me bad (the pill), really made me bad. And you hear so much about the coil and this and that and I thought I couldn't. My friend said the pain was so bad and she had to have the coil changed cos it slipped in her and I thought 'Christ', it got me really scared. I aint having the coil. And I couldn't have the pill. I used to choke trying to swallow them things, and I thought no and funny enough I went three years and I wasn't on anything --- so it was a shock, after all that time, to find I was expecting him." (33:14)

"I never used one till I had Pat. After I had Pat I was using it but the one (pill) I was using was making me ill because I used to keep vomiting all the time. I don't know what brand it was but it was some tiny yellow ones, you know. Used to make me really sick and I used to get dizzy spelly, you know, and hot flushes ----- Sometimes all of a sudden I used to feel hot all over and start sweating ---- I got a bit fed up of being sick all the time. I mean at the time I wasn't sure because the time you're usually sick is when you're pregnant and at the time I was taking the pill and I was still sick. It was like every morning I used to be sick so in a way it was like morning sickness. I thought I cant keep doing this and er I sort of ----- I think I went one day without taking the pills ---- I don't think it was more than two days anyway ----- and afterwards I found I was pregnant with Paulett After I came out of hospital I was talking to a woman doctor and I was telling her about the one I was having and the effects it was having because she wanted to know why I'd stopped so I told her. She changed it, and that one was making me sick too although I wasn't being sick as often as the first one When I started on the pill I was only about 9 stone, you know, 9/9½ stone, but since I've been on it ... I'm 13 stone now ... and my doctor at the clinic she keeps telling me I have to lose weight but I do take a lot of liquid." (36:18)

"They're all the same. They're all harmful, except the one that's not a 100%. I've gone into this time and time again. I've upset myself over it, but there's nothing they can do about it because the man won't have a vasectomy, and when they tie the woman's tubes I don't think that's such a good idea because it's not natural, it's not normal is it. The pill damages your system. The coil sometimes damages the womb." (29:13)

"I think they're all harmful. I wish they could find something that's safe - Mind you it's all temporary. These doctors everyday they finding something that's harmful to you. They find out such and such thing or, 'ill is doing this to you, or the coil or whatever, I mean they find these things everyday. Why don't they find something that's really safe and easy to use rather than keep frightening people about? You know you pick up the paper and there's something in there and so many people going off the pill and this is why so many babies are being born and all this sort of thing." (20:18)

(So what do you think about contraception - do you think it's harmful for the woman at all, or what do you think?)
 "Well I don't know whether it is but I think it is. I think it's bound to be doing harm inside something." (And do you think that's all forms of contraception?) "I don't think there's any better than any other one, they're all the same." (So do you use contraception?) "Yeh. Every night you take it down and you think 'oh god not this again'. You don't want to take it but, on the other hand, you don't want to get pregnant if you know what I mean." (13:12)

Fears were expressed most frequently about the pill and, of those women who stated the form of contraception they now use, the most common was sterilisation. In addition to concern about the safety of contraception two respondents questioned the ethics of prevention. The following dilemma, in addition to that quoted earlier, illustrate the conflict which arises for some women:

(Do you think it's important to plan children?)
 "Oh yes, oh yes, oh yes." (Why's that?) "Well because you have to plan a child because things might not be right and you don't plan and you find yourself expecting and then it's not nice. But if everything all nice you could think 'well I'll have one next year' Having a child is alright but I don't believe in abortion." (Why's that?) "Oh it's murder, it's wrong, it's a sin' I would never have an abortion, it's a sin. It's taking life. To use a preventative is sin. To use

preventative is sin because god didn't tell us to use any preventative or take a life, it's sin. But still I'd rather use preventative than have an abortion, you know. God put you on earth to relish and multiply and when you use a preventative you're killing out a nation." (So do you use it?) "Oh yes (laughs). I know I'm sinning but still, oh yes I do." (17:10)

Similarly, on the subject of abortion strong moral opposition was expressed by the respondents. Sixteen of the mothers interviewed felt it is murder and a further five thought that in addition to killing the baby abortion endangers the mother's health:

(You said that you don't really agree with abortion, why's that?) "I think that's the worst thing to do. I don't believe in it at all. Honest. You get pregnant and want to go and kill that baby. My friend said to me the other day 'there nothing there' but still there is something there. I don't believe in it. I hate when anyone say they going to do a thing like that. Cost my friend she did that the other day and I stop in her flat one whole day trying to convince her 'don't' but she already pay her money. I said to her 'I'll come to the doctor with you and get back your money' ... but she still go through with it. Sometime you go and do that and never be the same again, you know, you keep getting pain, because my friend she keep getting pain through that. Sometimes you can never have a baby again as well. I'd never do that." (1:21)

"No I don't like it. So long as you catch the baby already just bring it. Even to bring it and give it away ---- that's better. But I don't like to take a life. You make it so keep it. I don't like it. I don't like to ---- interfere with the baby. If he come --- you bring it and it born dead that right, but if you have it and if you don't want it, give it away, somebody will glad to take care of it." (So you wouldn't have wanted either of your daughters to have had an abortion?) "No I wouldn't abortion one. I would more protect them I wouldn't give them abortion because ----- my mum never really, and I don't like it. It make already, don't take life, it a life you take. I don't like that." (8:12)

Abortion "kills the baby and I think it harms your body as well. I don't like that at all." (In what way do you think it harms your body?) "Well I don't think any woman that have an abortion, especially more than one, I don't think she could be very clean inside. I don't like it at all." (28:10)

"... it kills and it can stop you from having kids for the rest of your life as well." (40:9)

A further three respondents agreed with abortion if the mother's life is in danger or if the child would be deformed, and one woman felt it acceptable if the mother already has six children. Two of the women interviewed simply stated that prevention is preferable, one agreed with abortion during the early stages of pregnancy and one respondent felt abortion is acceptable if you do not want the child:

"If you do it very young (it's okay) but when it get older I think that's wicked, but when it's very, very young I think you can." (12)

"I think if I didn't want a child, it was unwanted, I'd get rid of it I would. I wouldn't worry about it." (13)

Two of the women interviewed had had abortions, one because of the risk of a deformed child and the following is the other woman's account:

(After enquiring who reads the transcripts)

"I had an abortion about ----- 3 months ago, not that I wanted one really but I don't think I could have coped with three children living on my own you know. I love babies really but I was really bad I mean I probably would have had it really except ---- I don't know, I want to sort of do something and I mean having two is bad enough but having three would have been even more, would have tied me down even more so I did. I was really bad ----- had pains in me stomach, had headache, was sick. Couldn't stand it any longer. I thought 'my god ---- I've gotta get rid of it' and I had a hell of a time trying to get rid of it." (It was difficult to get a doctor to do it?)

"Yeh, I mean I could have had it done privately except that I didn't have the money. Then my doctor, he was away on holiday, and a doctor was standing in and the receptionist, she's a bitch The receptionist got everything mixed up, cos first of all I didn't have to see three doctors, she said I had to see three doctors. Then they'd sit down and ask me why you want this and why you want that and all that - which I didn't you see. So I went back to the Brook Centre and they talk to the doctor and I got the letter and I went to the hospital I came home and I cried and I cried and I cried, I couldn't stop crying for about two days and then one morning I woke up and I thought well I can't keep crying for ever like you know. I mean I'd just start to do something and I'd start crying

..... I think it's a sin. I don't, you know, believe in it (abortion). I mean I think ---- if it's a case of one has to choose between the mother and the child then I think the baby should really go (Do you think you'd ever have another one - or has it put you off for ever?) "What abortion?" (Yeh) "Another one" Good lord no' I regret having this one" (20:18/19)

White Respondents

Illegitimacy

Like the West Indian respondents, a high proportion of the white women interviewed (10/16) had conceived outside of marriage and again it was "something that just happened" rather than a positive decision to have a child

"Well to tell the truth, um ----- the children are from different fathers and I never really went out with Scott's dad but I just happened to have him and when I met Susan's dad I was three months pregnant. So from then I've been with him ----- and ----- when I was having him (Scott) he took me out a lot and bought me things and come to see me in hospital and that. That was it. And then I didn't really plan to have Sue but in a way it happened, but I was with him and then I was happy to have Susan. We didn't really plan to have another one but when I found out I was happy." (31:10)

Only two of the white respondents felt slightly jealous when friends conceived when they were single. One "would have felt a bit funny because I wanted to have one" (31:5) and the other respondent felt sorry in one way "and in another way I felt like, you know, jealous of them getting married like, you know. I used to think 'Oh look at them going off and getting married and enjoying themselves' but now I've heard, you know, you hear all them things about people getting married young and then they're married for about 10 or 14 years and then they get a divorce." (3:12)

Parental reaction to pregnancy among the white respondents who conceived outside of marriage was less violent than the reaction of many black parents. Indeed none of the white parents maintained a lasting resentment and all were eventually supportive:

(How did your mother react when you told her you were pregnant?) "Oh (laughs) she was angry, she was angry and hurt but she got over it. She helped me buy clothes." (31:5)

"They were very good, very good, because they knew it was their fault, because they should have been better towards me as parents. It was probably their fault that I was in the situation I was. My parents ----- because they probably had a bit of a conscience about it - they didn't lecture me or anything like that, they were very good, they were good to me." (They helped you out?) "Not that I would take it at that stage, I wouldn't. I refused any money help at that stage, but now I don't (laughs)." (23:9)

(How did they react?)

"Over the moon. Another grandchild. My dad goes counting them on his fingers ----- Oh me dad, he's easy you know. I think I take after him The disgrace, cos even a woman come up to me in the street and said 'Oh I could have been your mum'. You know me dad was, is, a great good man. You know what I mean like, he's a bit of a flirt and of course I mean we've got loads, just loads, of aunties and uncles that we haven't seen. Me sister used to say 'get off your bike dad'. D'you know what I mean (15:8)

(What about when you had the baby, how did they react to that?) "They were quite alright about it." (They weren't angry?) "No, no. They thought it was rheumatic fever at first and I think it was rather a relief that it was a pregnancy." (20:5)

Family planning

Only five of the white respondents planned any of their pregnancies and, as with the West Indian respondents, a conflict was evident between a belief in family planning and the haphazard actuality of conception. Of the 16 white women interviewed only one was not totally in favour of family planning because

"People plan too much. They decide not to have children until they have around them possessions and a nice house for the children and then they don't get pleasure from the children. They work so hard creating this beautiful atmosphere for the kids that they become different people trying to get it, they get lost in the rat race for money." (32:19)

The above quote conflicts with the white respondents (6/16) who felt it important to plan children because of the financial cost which often has to be provided without the woman's wage:

(Do you think it's important to plan children?)

"If you can, yeh." (Why's that?) "Well if you can money-wise like, you know, buy a house, something like that, you know, like if you don't want children until you've got a few things round you like." (11:9)

"Yes I think it's better to plan them. I made a mistake. You see when I got married first instead of going on the pill, which I didn't believe in then, I had Andrea a year and a couple of days after we were married. If I'd have gone on the pill I would have waited four or five years and then I'd have had my own house. Things like that which you don't get a chance when you have children." (35:9)

"Yes I think it is." (Why?) "Because with our present system of money it is very expensive to have children. If you've not planned at all and you've got everything just nice and suddenly a baby turns up, your lovely three-piece suite gets ruined and they play with the record player and pull all the knobs off everything ... It's quite expensive so unless you've planned for it you end up resenting the children." (45:10)

(Why do you think it's important to plan children?)

"Well if you've got children and they're like growing up and then say you're both out at work like and then you suddenly find that you're pregnant Then it means like the wife's got to pack up her job, and that, and stop at home Whereas if they plan to have it, they can get money put away, you know, for the baby when it comes along."

Other reasons why it is important to plan children, which were mentioned by the white respondents, are the necessity for space between each child, because motherhood is a long-term commitment, and because women are not simply reproducers:

"It's about time these randy devils were put down a peg or two. They always have a say in when to have kids and when not to have kids. I mean they've been using women like a production machine, you know what I mean. I think it's about time a woman, some big woman stood up to them. It's about time. I mean it should be equal. You know it doesn't

make a man feel less if he realised what the woman has been going through, if he realised what the woman has been going through for the last century, you know what I mean. I mean some ---- some of the women years gone back used to have about 20 kids which she didn't really want, you know. Cos he'd gone out and got drunk and just use the woman like a bloody machine. The only thing is the men of years gone back, as I say, they dominated the woman, you know what I mean, and I think what marks the men now is that the woman can say 'no I don't want any more kids'. I mean if I don't want no more I can go and get sterile. A woman can say that nowadays, you know what I mean, and I think it could be the cause of a lot of divorce because the woman's got the right now. It should be 'it's about time'' (15:16)

Fifteen of the sixteen white women interviewed thought it is important to plan children and yet only five respondents planned any of their children. The reasons for this discrepancy appear to be the same as those applied to the West Indian respondents: 'it just happened', ignorance, or reluctance to use, or failure of contraception, and opposition to abortion. The following quotes illustrate this:

"Nobody told me about sex. I was in a convent with all nuns (laughs)" (So you just found out?) "Oh ey I soon found out when I left (laughs) I just jumped into it with two feet. That was it, you know what I mean, and here's the result" (15)

(Did your mother tell you about sex at all?)

"No that was a disadvantage." (Did you know before you actually had the baby?) "Um ----- I had an idea but hadn't sort of connected as such you know." (So were you not really aware that you might get pregnant?) "I wasn't aware, no. It's a ridiculous thing to say really, cos people say ----- 'How can you be so naïve' ----- but when you're at a certain age, say between 13 and 17 depending on your background, you can be very naïve. But from the age of 18 onwards, no." (23:15)

(How did you find out about sex?)

"With a big bang and a lump out here (laughs)." (You weren't aware?) "I didn't know anything and as I said I thought I had rheumatic fever." (66:9)

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(To mother) "..... I says 'Well I didn't mean to do it, it just happened' and then she went on saying that I should have gone on the pill or been using something and I says 'Well I didn't know. I didn't know what was going to happen'. Which is true because I didn't know what was going to happen."
 (You didn't realise you could get pregnant?) "Well I'd been going out with him for about a week and after about a week he said he'd got a bed-sitter up Selly Oak and I used to go up there and stay the weekend sometimes and then me mother said if I wanted I could go and stop with him and go to work from there which I did That's like when I got pregnant I think it was about three or four months we used to spend before I got pregnant, you know. I didn't think, I didn't think I would." (3:11)

(Did you decide to have your children or did they just come along?) "I had two before I found out what was causing it" I didn't know anything about family planning you see I didn't know anything about the pill and I knew about rendells - you know the sort of pesteries - and also about the sheath. Well I know now if you use one you have to use one in conjunction with the other. Well I thought then if you used the rendells it would be alright and our Debbie was a rendells baby and our Christopher was an accident. I realised rendells wasn't any good so I made him use a sheath, which he hated, and it burst ... (that was Christopher). And I (as though baby talking) was a Breaker baby. My mum went out and got drunk on Breakers and forgot to take her pill so that was me." (32:20)

(What do you think about contraception.....?)
 "I don't really like the pill. I was on it and come off it."
 (Do you think there's other methods that are okay?) "Durex I suppose ain't too bad but it's not 100% safe though. I wouldn't have the pill, I don't think, because I'd be too frightened of the side-effects cos I had that before like, you know. And the coil I wouldn't dream of." (Why's that?)
 "I don't know. I'm frightened of it more than anything." (11:19)

"I was on the pill ... for about three years and I came off it last year to have him. I came off it in 1976 and I had him in 1977 and then I went back on the pill for a bit but it started giving me headaches and I went to the Family Planning and they took me off the pill and they put me on the coil. Up till now I've had the coil. Me husband's not very keen on it because of the spring, like the nylon, he says it hurts and he told me I'd gotta go back and do something about it My sister she was on the same pill as me for the same many years as I was and then they took her off one pill and

they put her on another one which was a low dosage one and anyway she was only on it for about a fortnight and then it gave her fibrositis in the leg and she had to come off it. Of course, then she was only off it for about a month, I think, and she got pregnant. That's why I was frightened of going from one pill to another one in case anything like that happened" (3:19/20)

(Have you ever used contraception?)

"I've tried a few things but they haven't worked on me."
(31:6)

(About last child not being planned) "When I say we didn't plan, I was using a contraceptive and then we decided to leave it off to have Sharon and then I went straight back to using the same thing but it didn't work for me so me inside must have changed. But once I'd given it a thought I weren't disappointed sort of thing. It was just so quick."
(22:9)

Asian Respondents

When interviewing the Asian women the interpreter was initially reluctant to ask the questions on contraception. However, the section was covered with all the Asian respondents with the exception of two whose husbands were present during the interview. The responses tended to be shorter than those of the West Indian and white women but only mild embarrassment was evident in that there was a lot of giggling. In one case the respondent's mother-in-law left the room.

All the Asian women interviewed were married, living with their husbands, and none had conceived out of wedlock. Strong disapproval was expressed on the subject of illegitimacy.

Family planning

As with the West Indian and white respondents, there was a discrepancy between a belief in family planning and the experience of conception. All but one Asian respondent felt it is important to plan children. The woman who disagreed with family planning objected on religious grounds:

"It's up to the gods how much you have. You can't decide.
It's wrong to interfere. The god will decide if we have more."
(27:3)

The remaining 20 respondents agreed with family planning but only one woman had planned some of her children. Again, ignorance of sex and contraception was evident. The vast majority of Asian respondents' first knowledge of sex was when they were married:

"My parents never tell me. In my religion they never tell to girls. They find on the way you know. When we got married we got Punjabi books, you know. I used to buy them and read them when I go to sleep. I used to keep my secret, you know. My big sister she never read any books."
(44:4)

(Did your mother ever tell you anything about sex?)

"When I used to go to school she used to say 'oh you shouldn't look at boys, don't go with them'. Everyday she say the same thing. But she never come up and say anything really like. Before I had my period I never knew anything. I just had them and then I started crying and mum start crying. I don't know why she cried (laughs). And then she said she was crying because I was young to have periods. Cos when a girl start having periods ----- If something go wrong they more quickly have babies than child who don't have period. I think my mum was crying cos then when a girl start periods the mum's more responsibility comes in. That's why she was crying. And I was afraid, I didn't know what was happening."
(20:7)

"When I got married and went back to work to see my friends they all ask me what it was like. I was so embarrassed I didn't know what to say. Because it's so strange you know if you don't know the man you married. It's horrible at first. I was so scared but after one week or two weeks it was alright cos we know each other. The first time (laughing a lot) I thought I was going to die. I didn't know what was happening."
(41:6)

"All our kids we just had them. We didn't know what to do."
(20:7)

Many of the Asian women were not aware of the different methods of contraception. The sheath was the most common method used and sterilisation the second most popular. Only one respondent thought abortion justifiable under any circumstances

and she isolated the situation where the mother already has grown-up children.

Cultural influences on motherhood

In addition to ignorance of sex and contraception restricting the choice of women, cultural and family pressures influenced the number of children the Asian respondents had. In the first place there is a pressure to prove fecundity

(Was it shortly after you got married that you had your first baby?)

No I couldn't have my first baby. They were all on at me. I was so young when I took over the house and then they all got on at me about I couldn't have a baby. They told me I couldn't have a baby for ever. Some people are silly. When you're young and you're married and you really want a child like that, when you don't have a baby in a year they say you never going to have it. I haven't had much good life really. I was so upset, and then I couldn't have one and they all wanted. I was only young and they didn't realise that I come and took over the house. I mean I had to do the cleaning, everything. Everything that lady do and still they wanted me to have a baby on top of that. I had my big one two and a half years after I was married and I said 'thank goodness for that' I was worried, I keep praying. I say I wouldn't even mind if I have a girl as long as I have one ... I just couldn't bear to hear those things they were saying." (20)

The desire to have male, as opposed to female, children in a number of cases resulted in the woman having more children than she first wanted

"We were thinking we would have three but I wanted a boy so we carry on and we get four girls. We might have another." (32)

"The only thing is I wanted a boy and a girl. As we have three girls I wanted a boy desperately. Even if I have two girls and a boy that's it but we're still wanting a boy." (11)

Moreover, in the case of three respondents the decision relating to the number of children the woman had was taken by the husband:

"When I had him I didn't want him but my husband did so he had his way. I told him (husband) I wanted to go to work, I don't like staying at home, and if I have another baby I have to be in the house again." (20)

"My husband decide how many children." (56)

"At first my husband want it and I didn't want it at first, I want it later. So if your husband doesn't agree it's not okay you know. If husband want and wife doesn't it goes to the husband." (He decides) "Well that what happen with the first one. I didn't want it and he say 'Yes' so (laughs) it was yes." (17)

Reasons for Motherhood

Planned conception was very uncommon amongst all respondents and, rather than the result of a rational decision, pregnancy was something that "just happened". Reasons for the haphazard nature of conception were consistent across the three ethnic groups and most commonly included ignorance of sex, contraception and abortion and reluctance to use contraception because of unpleasant side-effects. Thus of the of respondents only eight had actually planned any of their pregnancies despite overall agreement with the principle of family planning. Once pregnant moral objections eliminated the possibility of abortion among all groups although the degree of objection ranged from almost unanimous condemnation of abortion under any circumstance among the Asian women to a more qualified objection in the case of the white respondents.

Although illegitimacy was not accepted by any of the ethnic groups interviewed it is significant that while a high proportion of West Indian and white women had conceived outside of marriage this had not occurred amongst any Asian respondents. Since knowledge and use of contraception was not more widespread amongst the Asian women this statistical discrepancy would appear to reflect the rarity of pre-marital sex amongst the Asian community. However, despite the high illegitimacy rate amongst the West Indian respondents and suggestions (Clarke, 1966; Henriques, 1953) that illegitimacy is accepted in the West Indies, parental reaction to black respondents pre-marital conception was more violent and intense than

among white parents. Possibly this reflects a shift in attitude as a result of migration.

In addition to ignorance and the unsatisfactory nature of contraception, which was shared by all three groups of women, limiting the respondents' control over their fertility, Asian women were further restricted by cultural and family pressures and this reflects the importance of the family, rather than the individual, in Asian society (see Chapter 6).

3.

PERCEPTION OF GENDER ROLES

Whether a woman considers engaging in economic activity and, if she does, the type of work she considers suitable, is influenced by her view of the role of women and whether that role differs from that she assigns to men.

West Indian Respondents

In response to a question about whether the respondents consider some tasks, or jobs, particularly applicable to men or women nearly half (13/27) of the West Indian women interviewed did not think it possible to categorise jobs or tasks into those suited to either gender

"I think men can be just as good in the house as women. I mean you find some men they cook the dinner and you wouldn't believe it's a man that's done the cooking, and then you find some women they cook and you wouldn't even look at it ... You know it's the same thing ... you find a woman that can't look after children, you find a man that look after his children better than his wife ... Some jobs, you know, the things they (women) can stand some men wouldn't be able to stand it. I think there's weak sections on both sides, you know ... I mean some men they can't do things that women can do ... and they say the woman can't do this because ---- well the men supposed to be stronger and all that nonsense - I don't believe in it. I think woman can do it ... When people say women can't do this you'd be surprised ... They just assume that woman is usually the weaker sex. I've seen it happen that woman isn't always the weaker sex, which is something I know ---- you know it's just a question of trying to get them to do that and believe that." (36)

Moreover, a further five respondents felt that the only reason women appear more able housewives and mothers is that men do not make any effort in this sphere

"Women are better at doing the housework and that sort of thing." (Do you think men could do the housework as well if they tried?) "Of course they can, they have two hand as well. Why can't they? They don't want to do it." (43)

"I don't think there's nothing a man can do better than a woman. Some men are very hopeless. Like my one, he's hopeless! He sit down in the home, walk around and drink and do nothing. He can do it (housework and cooking) but he just don't want to. He just want to drink ... and batter the kids." (46)

"... general housework, unless the man is hopeless and don't want to do it there's no difference between man and woman. There's a difference between hopeless and don't want to do it. My husband know that if I'm busy and I said 'tidy this room', because I'm doing something and he's reading his paper, it's going to be there all day and it doesn't matter who want to come I won't do it, because he was supposed to do it and he know that I won't do it." (45)

Thus, nearly three-quarters of the West Indian respondents expressed the opinion that neither sex has a 'natural' or 'instinctive' ability for particular tasks. However, of the remaining respondents, six women felt that certain jobs are particularly suitable for men or women, either because of the heavy or dirty nature of the work or simply because of conventional sexual divisions within the labour market

"Men are made different from a woman ... I was working at a place once --- and I left because I'm not doing a job that the man is supposed to do: a scruffy, dirty job that a man should do. Sticking your hand in muck and working, you know, big pieces of iron that cut your hands off. A man, you know, that's a man's job and I'm not going to do it ... A woman should do a woman's job." (19)

"Nursing, I think that's a woman's job ... And such like bus driving and things like that ... I think that's a man's job." (28)

Similarly, three of the West Indian women interviewed felt that women are innately more suited to child care and housework.

"Women are better at housework than men. Some men can do housework but I don't think they do it as efficiently as women." (Why do you think that is?) "They made for that kind of job. I think women are made for that." (27)

(Could men do housework and look after children if they tried?)

"Yes if they tried, I think they could if they tried --- but I think a woman was born for that, you know ----- A man would really have to try to do these things whereas I think it comes from inside you with a woman, you just do these things but a man would really have to try." (37)

White Respondents

As with the West Indian respondents, a majority of the white women interviewed rejected the idea that women are bestowed with 'natural' abilities which differ from those skills possessed by men.

Four of the 13 respondents felt neither sex is necessarily better at a particular category of work

"Well this business about jobs for women, well we should go in for jobs like men do, we should go in for that cos we're strong, we're strong enough, we've got brains so we should go in for it. We should have the work that men do. Oh yes, that's a good thing that is." (31)

"Oh ey yeh I think a woman can do a man's job just as well as a man, yeh." (And do you think men can do a woman's job as well?) "Yeh, yeh, I don't think there's no difference in that, no not at all. It's just I suppose men feel less ----- mature if they're going onto a woman's job, you know what I mean, cos I mean women are doing men's jobs as well so I suppose they just feel ----- like a woman I suppose." (15)

Another woman expressed a similar point of view in that although she accepted that men can do some jobs better than women she did not see this as a 'natural' ability but rather the result of the sexist nature of our society.

"--- I don't think that they can inherently do things better, there are things men can do better because they are expected to do them better. They are able to decide, make quick decisions and carry them out because they're expected to do this and men who don't are looked on as failures and weak and women who are dominant are looked on as butch ----- just because they're going against society's interpretation of what they should do ... It's the system throughout the schools --- football and very bolsterous games are never taught to girls. They are expected to sit down and sort of do needlework and sort of reading from an early age ... They've never been expected to do anything at school so all the sort of forwardness that has been achieved by girls at school ... seems to go when they are adolescent and then boys are expected to do well in exams." (1)

Similarly, two respondents felt that women are more efficient at doing housework and looking after children but qualified this by saying that men could be equally competent if they made the effort.

On the other hand, however, four respondents felt that women have a 'natural instinct' which makes them better, than men, at housework and looking after children, while men are inherently more capable at other tasks

"Well a man's got his role. I mean I couldn't take the doors off and shave the bottom off so he could put the carpet down, and my husband doesn't clean up as well as I do, and things like that." (Do you think these are abilities you are born with, when you are born a boy or a girl?) "I think it is. It's just instinct, natural instinct to know how to do things properly." (23)

Finally, one woman expressed the opinion that men are better doctors and drivers, but was unable to account for this, and one respondent was aware that women cannot do work which involves intense physical strength.

Thus, seven of the 13 respondents felt neither gender has a particular 'natural' ability, one recognized the physical restraint on women and five were of the opinion that there is an 'instinctual' sexual division of abilities.

Asian Respondents

Among the Asian women interviewed there was a remarkable uniformity in the responses received and only three of the 15 women who answered the question thought that men and women have similar abilities, or that it is impossible to categorise which jobs or tasks are particularly appropriate to either sex:

"Even in the house they're a lot of jobs men can do and women can do. Some even cook. Some men can cook better than women can. Just depend. You cant really say what sort of thing." (17)

"They can both do the same." (36)

The remaining 12 respondents expressed the opinion that men are better at everything:

"Men are better at everything I should say. The woman cant do much, I think. Men always say 'A woman cant do that'." (65)

"Men can do everything women can do, women cant do what men can do." (11)

When probed about whether men are as able in the home as women, however, all the Asian women agreed that women are better at looking after children and at domestic tasks. Consequently, the overall opinion of the Asian respondents can be summed up in the following quote:

"Men more clever outside, not inside." (41)

When questioned as to why this is so the women considered it a 'natural' ability on the part of the men. Only one respondent offered an alternative explanation:

"The man can do everything best because in our religion the ladies are scared, nervous like, that's why they are a little behind men." (23)

Thus, the vast majority of Asian respondents were of the opinion that men are 'naturally' more capable outside the home, whereas women excel in the domestic sphere.

Sexual division of abilities

It was therefore found, among the women interviewed, that there are sharp cultural contrasts in perception of the sexual division of abilities. While the majority of Asian respondents expressed the opinion that men are better at everything outside the home, and that women excel in domestic tasks, among the West Indian and white respondents only a small minority felt that sexual divisions are the result of natural or innate differences.

The perception of sexual division of abilities is closely connected to perception of the role of a 'good' husband, or wife, the relative importance of economic activity for a man and role reversal. In response to questions in these areas certain differences between the three cultural groups of women were again evident.

West Indian Respondents

Characteristics of a 'good' husband and those of a 'good' wife

In response to the direct question 'What do you consider the characteristics of a 'good' husband?' only two West Indian respondents mentioned the importance of his role as economic provider, whereas nearly half thought a 'good' husband 'helps' in the house and the remainder isolated such characteristics as a sense of humour, understanding, kindness and gentleness. Moreover the concept of 'help' was interpreted by a number of the black mothers as taking a large share of the responsibility for running the house.

"... If I had a husband ... I want everything like share housework, share looking after the baby, doing the cooking sometime, and me doing the cooking sometime. I don't really mind that. I think if I sweep the floor he can sweep it sometime. Not me all the time doing all the housework; and I think if I can go to the launderette to do the washing I think he can do it as well. I don't mind if he helps do it, you know everything, and don't leave it all on me to do. And I don't mind him staying in a babysit while I go out (laughs)." (10)

"A good husband supposed to help in the house, you know, do everything 50/50. But some don't. That's it." (1)

"I think if you've got a good husband he's interested in you, and you don't have to say ----- 'do that for me and do that for me', he knows exactly what to do. If he's a good husband he should be like you, you know, and help you in every way he can. Do everything in twos and both of you share everything ----- if he's a good husband." (37)

However, although many West Indian respondents wanted their husbands to participate equally in domestic labour they recognized that the role of a wife is generally defined as taking full responsibility for the home. Several black women did however question the equity of this situation

A good wife should 'wash his clothes, keep him clean, cook his meals in time ... get the place tidy and make it clean.' (6)

"I think some men think that a woman should be a good cook, should be able to keep the house, you know, look after the children properly. Some men doesn't like their wives to go out to work at all because they think they should, you know, stay in the house." (27)

"All the majority of them want is somewhere to sleep occasionally, somebody to be a bedwarmer, someone to cook and someone to wash ... Most men are so selfish, if things aren't going their way they blame you. They have no consideration for a woman. Most men think all women are for is their pleasure and their purpose." (40)

"Most men want to be leaders and want the lady to stay at home ... Men think they're supposed to lead and we follow." (What do you think of that?) "No. I think everything should be equal."

Relative importance of wage work for men and women

Despite the fact that only two of the West Indian women interviewed mentioned the husband's role as economic provider in response to the question regarding the characteristics of a 'good' husband, it cannot be assumed from this that they do not consider this an important role. Indeed, on the subject of the relative importance of paid work to a man, compared to a woman, only two black respondents expressed the opinion that it does not matter who works, or that a woman has an equal right to continue her career. Nine respondents felt it was economically more important for a man to work because he will earn more money, while ten black women thought it more important for the man to work because he is the head of the household and/or should be the breadwinner:

"-----It's a long story really, they've (men) always been the breadwinner ... They see themselves as head of the family, don't they. I think they should be given the choice." (29)

"At least the man he should be the breadwinner - he shouldn't wait on woman." (28)

"He's the breadwinner. He's supposed to be the breadwinner (laughs). Nowadays you have equal rights so I don't suppose it matters, you know, but I think a man should be the breadwinner." (27)

More important for a man to work "cos I don't think a man like a lady to look after him all the time, he think 'I don't want no woman to mind me'." (9)

"I think in a way it is (more important for a man to work) because when he used to come here when I was working full-time at the hand press place and he wasn't he felt bad about it and used to sort of take it out on me. Yeh I think it is important really for a man to find a job before the woman because it makes him feel --- I think it makes him feel more secure sort of not having somebody to have to depend on." (36)

Role reversal

Although nearly three-quarters of the West Indian respondents had previously expressed the opinion that neither sex has a 'natural' or 'instinctive' ability for particular tasks, and despite the fact that many thought a 'good' husband is one who 'helps' in the house, only one black woman interviewed considered role reversal acceptable. The following quotes show the reasons for the respondents' disapproval of the concept of role reversal:

"The man should go out to work. It's no fun for a man stopping at home, looking after the kids, that's woman's work, you know, to look after the children." (39)

"That's woman's job, not a man's. Definitely not." (26)

"No, that's wrong ... I wouldn't stand for that (laughs). He's supposed to be at work. Home is where the woman should be and the man at work." (17)

"I wouldn't do it. He'd have to go out and work. I don't believe in it." (You think he should be earning the money?)
"Yeh he should be, should definitely. Calls himself the man of the house, why should I do it for him. I definitely wouldn't do it, definitely." (33)

"I think that is wrong. I think the husband supposed to be out at work and then the lady, you know the mother, be at home looking after the kids. I don't like to see the lady going out and bringing in the wages while he sit at home and don't want to go out and look a job. I think that's wrong."
(Do you think the man feels bad?) "I think he feel happy sitting at home, rather than going out to work." (So it would be the woman who'd get a raw deal?) "That's it."

"I wouldn't like that. It's just not right. It's not my scene. Man stop at home and the wife work, that's not fair, he's supposed to work." (Do you mean it's not fair on him, or it's not fair on his wife?) "It's not fair on him. I wouldn't like it. If I'm out all day and he's stuck at home I wouldn't like it. Somehow ... he cant look after the children as good as I. I wouldn't like Keith to stop at home from choice." (1)

... at home the husband not care with the housework, you have to, the wife, you know, the washing, cooking and things so it best for the husband to go out to work ... If you'll be at home you'll cook, wash and look after the children but the husband not going to; he cant wash in the first place and iron. Better for the husband get a job and you stay at home ... Some men, you know, you leave them at home to look after the kids, you know they gone to bookie and leave the children and gone to pub and all that. You know your mind wouldn't be steady." (6)

"That wouldn't be fair --- because perhaps if a lazy man ne want when the wife come in to get her round the stove - some of them don't want to cook, they don't want to wash. That wouldn't be fair." (7)

Thus, although the majority of West Indian respondents found the idea of role sharing desirable they are opposed to role reversal because the man 'should' be the breadwinner and, besides, he would not perform the domestic labour involved satisfactorily.

White Respondents

Characteristics of a 'good' husband and those of a 'good' wife

The three most common characteristics of a 'good' husband, expressed by the white women interviewed, were that he should 'help' in the house, have a job and be honest and loyal. Each of these was mentioned by three women, whereas other characteristics considered desirable were, for example, that the husband should be generous, clean, well dressed etc.

On the subject of a 'good' wife again many of the respondents included vague characteristics such as to be well dressed etc. About half of the white respondents, however, clearly identified responsibilities traditionally assigned to wives (e.g. domestic labour and child care) although, while recognizing the societal definition of a 'good' wife a number of white women indicated dissatisfaction with this definition:

"I think women get a worse deal (in marriage) because being as what's expected of them --- I think men still want to sort of live in the past where the woman should obey the man, you know what I mean, and --- things just pleasing to him, and I don't think that's right at all. I don't think that's a marriage, you know, just to please the one side and the men to have all the say, you know. I mean that's living in the stone age ... All they want of us, I mean, for the woman to be in the kitchen and in the house all day." (15)

As a wife "you're sort of property aren't you" --- you've got to do what you're told and you've got to be there when they want you. You've got to explain yourself, anything you do." (23)

They want their wives to be "slaves (laughs) ... Well I know he'd like me to be - an old woman (laughs) --- just keep the house tidy and things like that." (2)

Relative importance of wage work for men and women

Similarly in answer to the question "If both a husband and wife want to work do you think it's more important for the man to work?", a number of the white respondents questioned the validity of traditional sex roles.

Of the eleven white women who expressed an opinion five did not think the man's employment was necessarily more important but four recognized the fact that generally men earn more than women and as a result it may be more important economically. Similarly, one respondent was aware of the societal pressures on a man to work

"It can be more important for a man to work in some circumstances because not having a job in our society will be looked on as a failure. You are made to feel inadequate and this tends to cause a lot of problems ... People are made to feel it is essential to work - especially men. I think the reverse is true of working women ... peoples' attitude is that it is quite bad for a woman to work." (1)

However, of the remaining six who answered this question four women thought it definitely more important for the man to work because he 'should' be the economic provider:

It is more important for the man to work because "the husband's there to keep the family. I prefer him to be the breadwinner." (35)

"I believe the man is the head of the house and if he's the breadwinner he'll take that responsibility on, but if he's not working he's not going to take that responsibility on." (22)

Two white women thought it was relatively more important for the husband to work because if he took over the role of housewife he would not perform it adequately. Thus, despite a slight flexibility among white women on the question of sex roles, the majority expressed the opinion that the man should work while the woman takes care of the house and children. This attitude was also expressed in response to the idea of role reversal.

Role reversal

Only three women thought they would like to try role reversal and one respondent had actually experienced the situation where her husband was made redundant and she obtained a job. This is how she describes the experience which lasted for three months:

"He wasn't very domesticated then but he's learnt. He's very good now. I had to list everything he was to do. I had to list exactly how to go about it. He came from a family where the women did everything in the house - neither he nor his brother did all that much. But he's ----- he's not too bad now ---- he used to be very, very sloppy with housework, but he's learning." (5)

The remaining respondents found the concept unacceptable, mainly because they did not think it fair on the man or that he would be unable to fulfill the role of housewife:

"... It's not right for them to have to do that because it's not their natural role ... And it must be just as depressing for them to have to stay at home as it is for a woman." (23)

"I think I would feel guilty ... perhaps he's thinking to himself 'Well I should be at work and she should be at home'." (25)

Asian Respondents

Characteristics of a 'good' husband and those of a 'good' wife

In reply to the question 'What do you consider are the characteristics of a 'good' husband?' the most frequent response (8/11) among the Asian women interviewed was that he should work outside the home:

A good husband:- "look after his family properly and do his work properly" (11)

"bring up the children properly, provide the money; he should earn the money." (36)

"He should go to work for us."

"It's important for him to have a job."

Other responses included vague comments such as, "A good husband is nice and kind", "loves his wife", "good to his wife" etc.

Similarly, the question about the characteristics of a 'good' wife reflected the responses on sex role differences. The Asian women seemed to find the question very easy to answer, replying with short and remarkably uniform responses. Only three points were mentioned: a wife's responsibility to look after the house and family (mentioned by 11 respondents), obey her husband (6 respondents) and obey her in-laws (3 respondents):

"A lady is a good wife if she is good to her husband's relations and good with the neighbours and who don't make trouble. That's a good wife. And obey her husband - that's first!" (53)

A good wife "just look after the children. That's all. I don't know anything else."

"We always obey our families, look after the children properly, and good with our relations. The man should work." (27)

A good wife "looks after the children and house. A wife should obey her husband unless he is mad or bad." (36)

"She do what her husband tells her, and what her in-laws tell her and that's all to be a good wife. Nothing else." (47)

"The good wife should obey her husband and she should obey her husband's parents as well. She should love her in-laws as she love her own family." (23)

Role reversal

The rigid acceptance of sex role divisions, among the Asian women, made the questions about role reversal and the relative importance of the man's paid labour, in comparison to that of the woman's, somewhat redundant. Those women who were asked these questions rejected without hesitation the concept of role reversal - "Not right for men to stay at home", "Asian people don't do that" - and strongly believed that it is more important for a man, rather than a woman, to engage in paid labour.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that if a woman believes that it is her duty to obey her husband and in-laws their opinion will have a significant influence on the woman's actions:

"Woman got to listen to what man say. Woman sometime want to do this and that; man say you cant, then you cant." (17)

This situation will be considered later, particularly in relation to a woman's decision to engage in wage work.

Perception of Gender Roles

The major difference in the perception of gender roles, therefore, was between the Asian and the West Indian/white women interviewed. The Asian respondents appeared to experience little difficulty in answering the questions and responded with short, consistent answers. Among the West Indian and white women, however, a greater diversity of opinion was expressed, and longer, sometimes contradictory, responses were given. This difference in responses

reflects the reality of a more rigid definition of the role of women within Asian society.

The majority of Asian women interviewed expressed the opinion that men are 'naturally' more able to perform jobs outside the home, while women are 'instinctively' better at domestic labour and child care. Among the white and West Indian respondents, on the other hand, the majority did not feel that either gender has a particular inherent or natural ability to perform certain tasks. These attitudes possibly influence the sort of work for which the women would apply, and the extent to which they expect men to participate in domestic labour.

Certainly the majority of the Asian respondents accepted rigid sexual divisions and thus identified the husband's role as that of economic provider, and a 'good' wife as one who performs the domestic tasks satisfactorily and obeys her husband and in-laws. The Asian women interviewed did not expect their husbands to participate in domestic labour since they defined this as the woman's work. Many of the white respondents, on the other hand, expressed the view that men should 'help' in the house and some questioned the equity of a rigid sexual division of labour. This attitude was also evident, if anything more strongly, among the West Indian women interviewed. However, although many white and West Indian respondents were in favour of role sharing, in that men should participate in domestic labour, strong opposition was expressed about the concept of role reversal. Responses to this question demonstrated that ultimately the white and West Indian respondents, like the Asian women, accepted society's definition of the man's role as that of economic provider and woman's as domestic labourer.

The fact that the majority of women considered that the man's primary role is that of wage worker, while for the woman wage work is secondary to her role

of domestic labourer, obviously has implications for women's attitude to, and experience of, paid work. The difference between the three groups of women interviewed was in terms of the extent to which they feel men are able to, and should, participate in domestic tasks, in addition to their work outside the home. The basic sexual divisions were not seriously challenged.

4. PERCEPTION OF THE ROLES OF MOTHER AND FATHER

A woman's perception of the role of a 'good' mother, and that of an ideal childhood, is likely to influence her attitude to nurseries, and other forms of child care, and in turn her attitude to women's paid work. Similarly, a woman's definition of the role of a 'good' father may affect the extent to which she believes care of the children is her exclusive responsibility, or a responsibility to be shared with the father.

West Indian Respondents

Childhood of respondents

The respondent's own childhood may have an influence on the woman's definition of motherhood, especially since all but one of the West Indian women interviewed thought her mother, or mother substitute, performed the role satisfactorily and the majority of respondents are attempting to rear their children in a similar way. It may therefore be significant that a majority (17/30) of the black respondents spent a large part of their childhood (taken as to the age of ten) with a woman who was not their biological mother:

(Who did you live with during your childhood?)
 "A bit with me mum and a bit with me grandmother."
 (How old were you when you lived with your grandmother?)
 "--- Um, I don't know my mum that well. As far as I know I was living with me mum when I was about five and then she keep going backward and forward and I keep going to me grandmother, me suntu, all over the place, you know."
 (Her mother was moving about because of her work) (16)

"I didn't grow up with my mum. I grow up with my mum's sister and I was with her until I come over here."
 (Why was that?) "She (mother) had other children, and then she (aunt) didn't have any at the time. That's how they do it in the West Indies you see." (37 f)

"I lived with my gran and my auntie as I was the first grandchild, you know. That's the custom really home. The first grandchild, the grandmother, usually, and the grand-dad take that one. I was the first so they took me." (When you were a baby?) "I was about three or four months I think. They were in a circle really, my auntie and her sister, which was my great aunt, and then about five or six cousins. We all lived in a circle." (28:7/8)

"I lived with my grandmother and then she died and that's why we had to come (to England) or else we would have been out there alone. The funny thing about over here if you've got children you can't sort of --- say you've got a two-year-old and you're expecting another one - you can't say 'right mother there you are, you can have Charlott --- Aunt, you can have David'. Well this was how we was brought up when we was back home you see. Now my sister was with my mother's mother, I was with dad's mother --- Joyce was with Aunt Nelly, Sonia was with sister this and that, you know it was sort of split up. Funny thing about Joyce, she's 22 now, my brother's 25, us three bigger ones - I only knew Joyce on my way over here. It's the honest truth. I knew I had a sister Joyce, we used to write letters and things to each other, but to see her in flesh I must have seen her about twice in the twenty odd years. We were sort of, what you say, given away but we were looked after. But you don't find it like that with English people ... You see she (mother) didn't have all us children, we were all sort of given away and looked after in that manner. I didn't even know my dad properly when I got off the 'plane in London. Mind you he had to have my bigger brother, who came about three years before us, to come with him to say who we are so he could know who we are."

(Do you think that's the best way, so you're not stuck with a lot of children?) "I'm ----- No I wouldn't do that ----- I wouldn't do that to my children ----- but I'm not saying I didn't have a good childhood because I was brought up properly." (Did you go to your grandmother when you were small?)

"Three months. In that way we were sort of given away when we were three months. We always do that. Not everybody, but the majority of us out there. You sort of 'right Joyce you're three months, go to Aunt Nelly and mother can do the work in the field' and when she's having the next one she had it three months 'Sonia you can go there and mother can get back to doing her work in the field'. You see what I mean." (33-11/12)

Exclusiveness of mother/child relationship

The childhood of my respondents reflects a tradition of informal adoptions and shared child care amongst the extended family in the West Indies (see Chapter 5) and it has been suggested (Fitzherbert, p.604, Gregory, p.136) that because of this black women are less reluctant than white women to leave their children in the care of others while they work. Certainly the majority of West Indian women interviewed did not believe that a unique emotional relationship exists between biological mother and child. Of those women asked whether a child's own mother is more able to love the child than a woman who adopted the baby only five thought that the natural mother would love the child more, eight respondents were uncertain, and 17 believed that the woman who adopted the baby would love the child as much, or more, than the biological mother. Similarly, a majority of the West Indian respondents thought the father could love the child as much as the mother.

Indeed, only about half of the West Indian women interviewed felt that the mother is always the best person to care for the child:

(Do you think anyone other than the mother can look after the child as well as the mother, or do you think the mother is the best person?)

"I think anyone, anyone can look after a child if, you know, she's a kindhearted person." (38:F)

"... there's some mothers don't look after a child very well, and you'll find another person without children who can really look after kids." (28:9)

"The grandparents, because Trevor's grandparents had him from he was born till he was six. When he was six he joined his mum over here so he's always on about his grandmother. The parent and the grandmother should love the child equally." (16:F)

"Well, as I was saying, some mothers are not really good mothers so if an expert could be a mother to that child that child could get more love. Some mothers don't care of their kids. Some parents don't give their kids love and you can't trust them." (17:9)

(Talking about childminders) "You've got some who're very good because when I had the first one (baby), I wasn't married then, I used to put her out but the childminder was better than I was because I was young." (45:3)

Importance of 'formative' years

Neither did the majority of West Indian respondents accept the notion that the first five years of a child's life are crucial in that they lay the foundation for the personality. Only five women subscribed to this idea. The remainder believed that all years are equally important, that children change, or that the personality is fixed at birth. Similarly, only five of the West Indian women interviewed would blame themselves if their children grew up in a way they did not like. Many of the women felt that once a mother has taught a child 'right' from 'wrong' she can do no more, while others again believed that children are born with certain characteristics:

"... if they have a bad intention in them I think it only god that can change that." (7:9)

"... There's one thing you can't do and that's put a mind in a child, you can do everything else for them."

(Do you think that's something they are born with?)

"That's right, yes." (28:11)

(If they don't grow up as you would like, do you think you will blame yourself?)

"Well I don't think parents can blame themselves for that because it's the kid, you know. What they're thinking inside, you know ... Cos I have a little one up there, the one that's four, and he threatened the teacher over the school with a knife, that he's going to kill the teacher. I think it's just what's inside of him and I think he's easy to upset and he's got a nasty temper ... And I don't think it's up to the mother to blame - it's the kid. It's in him. Something coming out of

him, and if you upset him this thing come out and he uses violence you see. Sometimes that nothing to do with his parents, nor his grandparents or relatives. It's just what's inside of the kid." (40:12)

Exclusiveness of motherhood

Moreover, in response to the question 'Some people think that when you have children under five you should give up your life to the children, while others feel the children should fit in with your life - What do you think?' only four respondents thought the mother should give up her life while 17 were of the opinion that the children should fit in:

"Well I don't really want to give up my life for the kids. I would look after them but I'm not going to give up my life for the kids because these kids today they come up and start to work; well they have no life for you. Me born in the West Indies. Me love. I have feelings for my mum more than my kids for me ... They wouldn't spend for me like how I spend for me mum, no." (:11)

"----- I know they don't ask to come here but you've got to live your own life as well and I don't think that because you've had children you should drop everything and give them all the attention because you'd go mad after that. They grow up, they don't always remain children, and they do leave home. What happens then, you know. I don't think that's a good idea at all (laughs)." (29:12)

You shouldn't give up your life completely and devote it to them - I mean you might lose touch with everything.' (9:10)

"Well I think --- in most cases what a mother does it's usually for the benefit of the child in the end. Like I want to go out to work, it's not really for myself because I mean I could stay home. I have clothes to wear, I have food to eat but I mean children always need that extra - they need more clothes, they need toys, then they wanting this, then they wanting that. The only reason you go out to work is to be able to buy them things really, not only them but buy your house nice things as well --- I mean it's really for their benefit as well." (20:16)

"Well you shouldn't really give up your life. You can carry on with your --- your career, anything you're doing. You shouldn't just devote your time to the children." (18:11)

The responses obtained in answer to these questions seem to suggest that West Indian women are less reluctant, than white women, to share child care with others and continue with their lives. However, this impression was somewhat contradicted by the responses given in answer to a question about mothers working if they do not really need the money. Only eight of the West Indian women interviewed thought it acceptable for a woman to work under these circumstances, nine were uncertain or did not answer, and 14 respondents felt the mother should not work outside the home:

(So what do you think of mothers with children under five working if the mother doesn't really need the money?)
 "I think it's unfair on the children really and if they don't really need the money I don't think they should work. I think they should stay at home and look after the children cos some mothers the husband working a good --- you know bringing in big enough money to support the family. I don't think they should go out to work unless it's necessary."
 (10:7)

"Well I think they're trying to push the children off her. They might, you know --- sort of didn't care whether they had it (the child) or not really ..."
 (18:12)

Attitude to communal living

Although a large number of the West Indian respondents thought that a woman other than the mother can love and care for the child as well as the mother and did not think that a woman should devote her life to the child, a majority of the West Indian women interviewed were opposed to the idea of communal living. In answer to the question 'What would you think of the situation where there are several families, with children, living together and sharing child care?' only seven respondents were in favour of the idea, ten did not really answer the question, and 14 of the West Indian women interviewed said they would not like the situation. A number of respondents did not like the

Idea of communal living because of the effect on the children - they would be deprived of mother love, some children would be treated more favourably than others or the children would not know who their parents were.

The role of a 'good' mother and that of the father

Responses to the questions about the role of a 'good' mother and father tended to be more diverse than other answers. However, the most common task ascribed to a mother was that she should teach the child right from wrong. The second most commonly mentioned task was that of physical care and to "give the child everything they want". Other points mentioned were that the mother should be loving and understanding, be there when the child needs them, to encourage them in their education and to teach their daughters for the role of wife and mother:

"Well a good mother, you keep them clean, you give them love, you know, you learn them as they go along the good from the bad, you know, teach them to be honest most of all." (17:9)

"Well first, the first thing is to bring them up, you know, in the right way. Well when you think of it, all some people think that bringing up children is just buying things for them and you know giving them nice clothes but that is only part of it. That is only the basic really, the main responsibility is to bring them up to love and serve god ..." (21:3)

"... I think the most important thing is to have a good education ... Well dressed, stay clean, you know. Not like some of these kids walking down the road and really filthy. I think they live a horrible life in their house, you know, when you see them down the road all their trousers all torn and they look disgusting. I think that's a bad reputation for the parents and for the kids as well. When they're dressed really alright, you know, nice and clean, I think they lead a happier life that way, and you tell their mother is a good mother that way. But with the filthy ones you 'ooh look at that one'. You know if you go to their house you can't even have a cup of tea or nothing like that." (40:7)

"Well you try to help them with their school --- first of all you look after them when they are very small, do the best you can you know. Try to give them the best meal, give them the best meal and you keep them clean, you know, comb their hair and let them look tidy and nice, and keep them the best way you can. Teach them something good..." (18:9)

"I don't know, it's very hard to say what a good mother should be. I suppose as long as they're always there to talk to the child and listen to what the child has to say." (29:11)

(Reasons why respondent thinks grandparents were good)
"Although they take the whip out sometimes for me, but it was for me own good you know. If she didn't brought me up properly I couldn't have a fiance now, and a kid, and keep the place tidy. As soon as you come to the door it's alright for you to come in. So everything they did it was for me own good you know." (1:17)

On the question of the role of a 'good' father the most common response was that he should do the same as the mother, although a fairly large number of women (12) thought that the father should take on the specific task of discipline. Others felt the father should 'help' with child care, and three of the women thought he should financially support the child. One respondent suggested that he could not do much because he is out of the house most of the day, and another that he should set an example

(What sort of things do you think a father should do for the children?)

"Well do everything that a good mother would do. A good father could change a nappy for the kid because it's his child. He must share all the love for the kid with the mum." (17:9)

"... the mother will be a bit soft, you know ... One of us have to be a bit hard, you know, and it's best if the father is the hard one and the mother soft. Cos with me I'm soft with Dorne. If say something happen I go berzerk, start shivering, and he'll have to cheer me up. When I get that way it even worse for her because probably it's not that bad but being that I'm making a fuss of it she start to yell. It's best if it's the father." (1:19)

"... I think children more ... understand or hear when the father speak to them than the mother cos when you talking to them as a mother they think you're really joking or something. As soon as the dad shout they understand and you might be talking all day and they take no notice, you know..." (37:9)

"Well there isn't much they can do is there. Well mine he plays with them and things sometimes, not very much because seldom he's here. Most of the time, like now, he's at work, they're at school. Then he come home tonight about ten most of them are in bed, it might only be the oldest girl down here, most of the smaller ones are in bed early. I don't think there's nothing much. The most they can do is to love them and, you know, when they're around they can play with them like. Otherwise I don't think there's nothing much they can do." (28:9)

"Well I think he should be the sort of person --- that the child can look up to sort of, set an example, and be thoughtful and not sort of abuse the mother in front of the child and things like that." (38:9)

The majority of West Indian respondents did not feel that it is necessary, or correct, for a mother to devote her life to her children, and believed that others can look after the child as well as the mother. Very few of the women interviewed felt that the first five years of a child's life are more crucial, than other years, in terms of personality development. Similarly, the majority of respondents did not hold themselves responsible for the way their children develop.

A large number (14) of the mothers interviewed felt that a 'good' father shares, with the mother, responsibility for the child. This responsibility includes teaching the child right from wrong, the physical and emotional care of the child, and encouragement with education. Fathers, in addition, were seen as being more suited to the task of discipline.

However, despite these attitudes, a majority of the West Indian mothers interviewed thought it wrong for a mother, with children under five, to work when she does not need the money. A majority of respondents were also opposed to, or

uncertain about, the situation of shared child care among families living together, many expressing opposition on the grounds that it would adversely affect the children.

White Respondents

Childhood of respondents

Unlike the West Indian respondents, a majority (12/16) of the white women interviewed spent the whole of their childhood with their biological parents. Of the four exceptions, one respondent spent her childhood in an orphanage, one was adopted, another lived with her mother and grandmother, while the fourth spent a lot of time with her grandmother because she was a twin.

Exclusiveness of mother/child relationship

On the question of whether a woman who adopts a baby can love the child as much as the biological mother six of the white respondents believed that a unique bond exists between the biological mother and baby

"Myself I think it's better if it is your child because it's part of you."

On the other hand, nine respondents believed the woman who adopted the baby would love the child as much:

"This theory about natural mothers, there is no such thing ... When I had this baby ... the next morning when you feed him, and when you care for him, that's when the mother love comes - you're not born with it. It's actually quite normal to reject a child at first. Nobody's born with a natural mother's instinct. The first instinct is to feel 'oh shut up'. Anybody could take anybody's child and love it, if it's in them to love, if you get it young. I'm not saying anybody could take a child of 13 ... But if you give someone a baby, a baby born say a few days ago, give someone that baby and say 'it's your baby', if it's in that person to love they will love that baby. Mother love is a thing that grows, it's not a born instinct. It's an instinct to love a child, but it doesn't necessarily have to be your child." (32:18)

Similarly a majority (13/16) of respondents thought the father could love the child as much as the mother.

However, although a majority of the white respondents believed that a woman can love a baby which is not related to her and that a father can love the child as much as the mother, only two white respondents disagreed with the idea that the mother is always the best person to care for the child:

(And do you think that anyone other than the mother can care for the child as well as the mother?)
 "Yes, I think grandparents often tend to be better because they've had experience of handling other children, they've gone through the situation before." (1:9)

(So you've always been with your children while they've been small - do you think that's best?)
 "I do really but there again there are the odd mothers ... they go through a bad spell and have a bad depression and it's better for them (for the child to go to a minder) - for one-parent families. It's better for the mother's sanity ... We've got one who was a battered wife and her child got very, very clingy - not insecure but the child was terrified of men, dogs, cats, nearly every living thing and if a man came in a room she'd hide under the table, things like that ---- But she goes to a minder now and her mother goes out to work and the improvement in both of them is beyond all belief..." (5:5)

Importance of 'formative' years

Unlike the West Indian respondents, a large proportion (7/16) of the white women interviewed were adamant that the first five years of a child's life are crucial in terms of personality development, and only two respondents totally rejected this suggestion:

"... from this age (4 months) right up till five their lives have been moulded, what comes after that is not very important. Once you've got them that far what they're going to be is in them already, nobody can rub it out ..." (32:17)

(And how important do you think the first five years of a child's life are in determining their personality?)
 "I think it is very important --- I think it is the basis. The foundations for their future life is firmly set by then." (1:13)

"... The first five years has got a lot to do with how they'll grow up the next few years." (21-11)

Five of the white respondents thought they would blame themselves if their child/ren grew up in a way they did not like

"...If they grew up different to what me and me husband thought about like then we knew that we'd gone wrong somewhere with them, the pair of them." (3-23)

"Well I suppose I would (blame myself) ... When I look at some families and how their children are, you know, sort of round here. They don't care what they do, they're terrible, cheek people you know. I suppose if mine were like that I would blame myself. I would wonder how I'd gone wrong because it is up to the parents how the children grow up."

Two of the women were uncertain whether or not they would blame themselves and nine did not feel they were solely responsible for the child's development

"--- No I don't think I will now (blame myself) because I don't think I'm the only person responsible for bringing them up ... and their general environment is very important, the sort of society we live in is important. These things have got much more influence upon them than me as just one person." (1-13)

Exclusiveness of motherhood

As with the West Indian respondents, only two of the white mothers interviewed felt that a mother should devote her life to the children. Seven respondents were of the opinion that a woman should continue with her life, and four felt the situation should be one of compromise.

"It should be that the child should fit in with your life I think. If you didn't think that way the child would become the dominant partner --- and you wouldn't be existing as an individual ... I mean you have to feed the children and you have to face your responsibilities but to allow a child that comes into the world to take over the complete being of you, that's wrong." (23-14)

----- They have to fit in with my life. If I want to go out and get a baby sitter that's it, you know. I won't stop in because they've got their life in front of them like." (35:7)

"You have to compromise. You can't give yourself entirely to them, it's not good for you nor the children. But there again, you can't expect them to fit into your life ... (5:13)

"....It's got to be a two-way thing. Say you're the sort of person who goes horse riding five times a week, you can't very well drag the little child when you're going. It's got to be give and take. I don't think you should say 'I am a wife and mother and therefore I cannot ever go horse riding again'. That would be too ridiculous for words. It's just a question of give and take." (32:19)

Although only a small minority of the white respondents felt that a woman should give up her life for her children, however, a majority thought it wrong for a mother to work for other than financial motives:

"Myself I think it's just their way of getting out of their responsibilities of looking after the children. If they don't need the money they don't need to work." (22:)

Four of the women interviewed thought it acceptable for a mother to work even if she does not need the money:

(What do you think about mothers, with children under five, working if the mother doesn't really need the money?)

"I don't see anything wrong in it really --- because I mean some women can't stand stopping at home even though they've got kids --- and they need to get out and get company cos I mean some of them that's the only company they've got, getting to work." (2:8)

"A lot of people have had careers and had to give them up and I think that must be terrible ... (e.g.) Angela, she's only 19 and she's looking after her husband, a 14 year old, a 12 year old and a baby ... She was a book-keeper and a typist and could do shorthand. She's always had a dam good job and been able to buy what she wants and now she's looking after this family - it must be terrible! (32:20)

--- Well I must say that before I had children I thought it was terrible except that I did realise that the surveys that had been done on latchkey children showed the children were much more independent. I thought this was probably because the parents didn't have the opportunity to, of knowing what the educational value was in play for children. So in a way I just thought it was the fault of the mother, whereas in fact now I think it's a good thing in some ways (for the mother to work) because it allows the kids to be independent Also, the isolation which, to put it mildly, is quite bad. --- It's bad for women as individuals because they can very easily get depressed and not really do the job - motherhood - as well I think that mothers who are working are very often tired but ---- if they are just caring for the children they can tend to get very unstimulated and just as likely to be tired, and perhaps even get neurotic and be just as ineffective in helping the child progress ... (1-4/5)

Attitude to communal living

As already noted, the vast majority of the white respondents felt that no-one can look after the child as well as the mother. It is therefore not surprising that the majority of respondents rejected the idea of shared child care within a communal residence. Only two women saw positive advantages in this situation while a number felt the children would suffer or that the woman is simply trying to abandon her responsibilities:

"... I've had them (the children) and that's it. I should look after them, you know." (35-7)

The role of a 'good' mother and that of the father

The most common responsibility ascribed to the 'good' mother was that of caring for the child's physical needs:

(How would you describe a 'good' mother - what do you think a good mother does for her children?)

... What I think a good mother is like is making sure that they eat and, you know, they drink ... and make sure they're fed properly and that. Keep them nice for when they go to school and ... be with them on the night time and not go out like when they come home ... and not leave them on their own all the time like some of the mothers do ... We've seen the mothers going in the pubs and leaving the prams and that outside

while they've been in drinking. That's a thing I could never do. I could never do that, leave the kids outside and go in a pub and start drinking ..." (3:17)

Other, less frequently mentioned, tasks ascribed to the 'good' mother were such things as the mother always being available to listen to the child, allowing the child to develop their independence, preparing them for marriage, and religious education

"I think it's somebody who's always there, who's always got time to put down whatever she's doing and stop and listen, you know. Not sort of to get them up and get them dressed and then sort of shut yourself off from them for the rest of the day while you get on with what you want to do." (25-13)

"---- Well I think it's important not to be clinging and demanding affection from the children --- and that she doesn't try and put all her hopes on their achievements and try to get them to do things she didn't do --- That she was able to allow them adequate opportunity to gain independence --- and to achieve their own individual potential as soon as possible." (1:1)

"Well ---- I leave them to go their own way. Well for me I think the only way a child's happy is being able to go their own way in their own house. I mean I tell Julie that at school she must do what the teacher tells her, when she's at home she can find her own entertainment what she's happy with. If she wants to read to me, or her dad, she reads. If she wants to play I leave her to play. If she wants to go and wash up the dishes, which I know is more mess for me, I let her do it. Things like that to develop on her own. What she thinks she's happy doing I leave them to get on with I have to think about what they want to do and never make them do what they don't want to do. That's the most important thing, to me, for the child to develop. Don't restrict them." (15-10)

"Would you say your mother was a 'good' mother?"

"Oh yes ... Well the four of us girls have all made very good marriages ... She must have done a pretty good job." (5-12)

"We're religious people here now, you know, we've got a religion, we're Jehovah's Witness and we go a lot by the Bible how to bring up children." (And what does the Bible say about bringing up children) "You should bring them up in a disciplined way, you know, and they should show respect to the parents. We

have a lot of talks on children, on how they should be brought up, and I think it's helped me a lot, you know. Because if I hadn't had this religion I think I would have been like the rest, like other people, just couldn't care less you know, so it does help you to bring up your family. It's helped with my children because of the way they are they don't go out and commit crimes and things like that, cheeky to anyone, so it has helped them. It does help our religion, cos religion ----- a lot is going down because a lot aren't bothered with religion." (21:7)

On the question of the role of a 'good' father eight of the white women interviewed mentioned the father's duty to discipline the children. Other respondents, however, thought the father should share child care with the mother (5), while one felt that the father's role is that of head of the household

(What do you think is the role of the father - what do you think he should do for his children?)

"Well like, you know ... keep them in hand sort of thing. If they start playing up, if it gets too much for the mother and that ... then the father should take over them and keep them in hand. This is what he has to do with her now, cos she gets too much sometimes and I say 'Look take her over' and he starts on her and then she's alright. She knows that when he tells her to do something she gotta do it or she'll get smacked, whereas if I say to do something she wont do it." (3:18)

"I think it is looked on as breadwinner and saying 'carry on you're doing a good job' (laughs) but I think it should be taking an active part, equal to what mothers do. I think there isn't any difference at all between what either parent should be doing." (1:9)

"The father should play almost an equal role --- with his children if he wants to build up that relationship ... All children need love from both sources, they need both male and female, to grow up normal ... What a child goes through, you know, in their relationship towards both sexes as a child is what makes their basic relationship as they grow older. If you have a bad relationship with say a father, or a man, when you're a child then you'll ----- those people will find it very difficult to make a good relationship with a man later in life. (3:10)

Well, as I say, he's got to be the head of the household and he's got to take that role first anyway." (21:1)

Thus, among the white women interviewed, a 'good' father was seen as one who disciplines the children, although five respondents saw his role as the same as, or supportive of, the mother's. The respondents' definition of the role of a 'good' mother seemed somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, the physical care of the children (which could be performed by others) was most frequently mentioned as a task of the 'good' mother, and a majority of respondents believed the father and a woman who adopted a baby could love the child as much as the mother. However, a majority of respondents felt that no-one could care for the child as well as the mother and were opposed to shared child care in a communal residence. Similarly, although most of the women did not think it right for a mother to devote herself to the children they felt it wrong for a mother to work for other than financial reasons.

Asian Respondents

Childhood of respondents

The majority (12/21) of Asian respondents had spent their childhood with both parents. Seven of the Asian women interviewed had lived with their mother but had been separated from their father because of his migration and one respondent had spent her early years with her grandparents. Thus, all but one of the Asian respondents had lived with their mother during their childhood. The woman who had stayed with her grandparents did so because there was nobody to stay with them. They wanted a child to stay with them. I went to stay with my grandparents, rather than the other children, because I am the oldest." (50:1)

Exclusiveness of mother/child relationship

Although adoption, both formal and informal, is very uncommon among Asian families, only two of the Asian respondents felt that a woman who adopted a baby could not love the child as much as the natural mother. Indeed a higher proportion of those questioned (5/11) felt that a father could not love the child as much as the mother

"... The mother stay more with the child ... the mother is more time with the child so the mother loves the child ... the mother is more time with the child so the mother loves the child more than the dad cos the dad's always at work. The more time you stay with anybody the more you love." (20:6)

Despite the majority of Asian respondents believing that a woman who adopts a baby can love it as much as the mother, however, nineteen of the 21 women interviewed thought the mother is the best person to look after the child/ren

(Do you think anyone can look after the children as well as the mother, or that the mother is the best person?)

Well children like their mother the best. Even a bad mother they do." (17:5)

"... I think the way the mother could look after the child no other could do it. I mean they might do it for a week or two. The other weeks they get so nervous they can't cope with the child so I think a mother should look after her own child." (11:4)

"Aunties and that can love the child but they can't give the love like the mother. The mother is the best person." (23:2)

Of the two women who thought that other people can look after the child as well as the mother, one felt that the mother-in-law is often competent, while the other thought "It depends a lot on the ladies really. I mean every person is different. Some don't mind looking after a child but some do. You can't really say." (20:7)

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Exclusiveness of motherhood

In response to the question about whether a mother should give up her life for her children or whether the children should fit in with the mother's life all the Asian women interviewed thought the first alternative was correct:

"Well of course you have to put yourself more for the children. You've got to see them first before yourself. You see this morning I get up and bath them and get them ready and then secondly I look after myself." (17:5)

"It free life, you know, when you're not married. When you have children you have to do everything for them. You don't care about yourself." (35:3)

"Well we don't have our own life. We spend more time at home you see. I mean English women, most of them, they leave their kids home and have a life of their own as well." (Which do you think is best?)

"Ours is best, but it's boring. It's terrible. I think I'm getting homesick." (14:4)

Since the majority of Asian respondents believe that the mother is the best person to look after the child, it is not surprising to find that a majority feel it is wrong for a mother to work if she does not need the money. However, one respondent thought "if a woman is working it's much helpful" and four of the Asian women interviewed thought it acceptable for the woman to work if satisfactory child care arrangements have been made. One respondent mentioned the possibility of working as a positive advantage of the extended family:

"Like if it's my husband's family, like his sister or brother, or my brother or sister, if they are staying and they love each other and they stay in the same house it's alright like if one go shopping another can look after the children. If somebody want to start work like, if one work one can look after the children." (23:3)

Attitude to communal living

Five respondents, on the other hand, objected to the idea of communal residence:

"I think that's terrible ... I think most of the time you have arguments when you're all crowded around you see. It's best to have a house of your own and look after your own kids." (11:4)

"Sometime it's alright but most of the time there's arguments. I think it would be better if we lived on our own because there's my sister-in-law and mother-in-law and sometimes there's quarrels. Well she's alright, it's my mother-in-law I have to do what she says." (47:3)

"That's a big problem. I mean with your in-laws it's your in-laws who are the boss, you know. Your mother-in-law she's the boss and you always have problems. She forgets how she was when she was a teenager. She wants to take over and keep everybody in her hand. Like if I want something she probably say 'oh you had a new dress last week and you want another one'. You get a lot of problems and staying with your in-laws you don't feel happy then, when you're under the control of somebody." (20:3)

The role of a 'good' mother and that of the father

The Asian women interviewed defined a 'good' mother as one who meets the physical needs of the child/ren, helps them with their education and teaches the child/ren right from wrong:

"She cook them dinner, like at the right time, and she dress them and she tell them how to behave." (59:2)

"The best mother is one who can look after their children, can tell them good things, tell them off if they do bad things. That's a good mother." (8)

A good mother "give the children what they want. Like I have to ask them what they want to eat and give them that and ask them if they want some money to spend and give them that as well." (50:3)

"The good mother should give a good education to their children, and good clothes, and things like that." (32:2)

(Talking about why her own mother was not good)

"Well I used to wash all the clothes and the housework and the mother should do those I think. Children can help sometimes. I'm not blaming her. I mean all the girls do work. They should know all the cooking and things.' But your brothers didn't help." "No, the brothers lucky." (65)

The role of the 'good' father was seen, on the other hand, as that of breadwinner, 'helping' the mother (although many respondents recognised that few men do this) and encouraging the children in their education and when they are older:

"He knows he has to look after them all, he has to do so many things for the kids as well. Not only for himself and me but for the kids as well." (What sort of things?)
 "I mean if he doesn't work there's nothing to feed the kids. So if he's ... out of a job it's worrying what we are going to do. If he forget everything we starve." (11:4)

The good father should "work hard at work" (32)

"It's his responsibility to work and he should work properly ... I think about the kids, I mean we need to educate them. When they go off to school they need proper things ... and I say (to husband) 'If you have four kids you should work for them, it's your own fault'. I mean I tell him, I say 'you know I can't work cos there's nobody with them'." (20:5)

"... If a mother can't bring them (the children) up nicely the father should help. Some things mother don't know and father know so he should tell them." (23:3)

"He should look after them when he come home from work, for one hour. My husband doesn't. He sit by the fire you know and anything the children want he tell me 'get up and see to the children'. I keep telling him every time 'why couldn't you' ... Especially if you're working you can't. Yes sometime they want the work so quick that I have to work sometime in the evening ... I left them with my husband one day and when I came back the kitchen was all messed up and they were all crying. He can't look after them. He said 'you should look after them. If you go out take them'. I said 'why can't you look after them for one day when I look after them every day'. He said 'well the woman can look after children, I can't.' (41:5)

The father should "think of them when they grow up, when they have a good education and a nice job." (25)

"He have to think about their future life, good education, that's the best thing." (50)

Thus, the role of a 'good' father was defined, by the Asian mothers, as providing for the children financially, encouraging them in their future life,

and helping, but not participating equally with the mother. This view is consistent with the responses received on the question of sex role definition where the majority of Asian mothers thought the man is competent outside the home while the woman's role is within the domestic sphere.

The vast majority of the Asian women interviewed thought that no-one could care for the child as well as the mother and all felt it correct for a mother to devote her life to her children. Only five of the Asian respondents considered it acceptable for a mother to work for other than financial reasons. However, the majority of the respondents did not think they would blame themselves if the children did not grow up as they had hoped because parents tell the best things for their children but they may not listen (53) or because:

... When a person is born --- it's all with him, it's all with him then, how his personality or how he's going to be, sometimes sad comes into it, sometimes happiness. It's all done on our part. I keep on telling my kids that if they behave and love god, and so on, they'll be with god for ever and you don't have to come in this world ever again. If you don't forgive other people, and keep on being tough and rough and hurt other people just for nothing it all carry on. The life is all carrying on. If you hurt somebody in this life, or thieving or robbery then you have to be born again. This is how the world carry on. So I always give them manners so they can be nice and love god. The way we can get out of this world is just by loving god. (20:8)

Perception of the Roles of Mother and Father

The most frequent characteristic of a good mother mentioned by all three groups of respondents was that she should care for the physical needs of the child. Other responsibilities mentioned by a large number of the women were to endow the child with moral standards and to help with education.

While the vast majority of white and Asian women interviewed felt that it is always best if the child is cared for by his/her mother only half of the West Indian

sample were of this opinion. This discrepancy possibly reflects the tradition of informal fostering which takes place in the West Indies and the fact that a majority of my West Indian respondents spent a large part of their childhood with a woman who was not their biological mother.

Another significant difference between the three ethnic groups was that while all the Asian respondents felt that a mother should devote her life to her young children, only six of the white and West Indian samples agreed with this view and this is compatible with the greater emphasis placed on the woman's role as mother within Asian culture.

Despite these differences, however, the majority of the women of all races united in their disapproval of mothers who work outside the home for other than financial motives. The condemnation expressed by some of the West Indian respondents who also felt that the mother is not necessarily the best person to care for the child, and that a mother should not devote her life to her children, is surprising.

A majority of respondents thought that a father can love a child as much as the mother and that a 'good' father participates in child care. The West Indian and white respondents, in particular, also emphasized a father's role in disciplining the child while amongst the Asian mothers more emphasis was placed on his role as breadwinner.

5.

ATTITUDE TO CHILD CARE

West Indian Respondents

Child care used and preference of mother

Of the 31 West Indian respondents only three mothers had not worked outside the home while they had children below school age. A variety of child care

arrangements had been made by the remainder of the women interviewed.

Fifteen of the mothers had obtained local authority day nursery or nursery school places for their children, ten had employed child minders, and one sent her children to a private nursery. Six mothers had arranged a split-shift system of child care with their husband or boyfriend.

Only one of the 15 mothers whose children had attended a local authority nursery was not satisfied with the care the child had received. The one exception expressed contradictory attitudes, on the one hand saying that the child had benefited from attending the nursery but later expressing fears that children do not receive enough love in that environment. Three of the mothers whose children had been cared for by minders were satisfied with the arrangement although one expressed satisfaction because the minder "used to take him to the nursery, playgroup and stuff like that so he had the best of both" (24:1). Of the remaining seven women who had employed child minders one would have preferred a close relative to have cared for the child and the other six would have chosen a nursery. Only one of the six mothers who had used a split-shift system of child care with her husband or boyfriend was happy with this arrangement. Four would have preferred a nursery and one a child minder. Similarly two of the three mothers who had always cared full-time for their children would prefer to work outside the home and leave their children either with their mother or in a nursery. The one mother who had sent her child to a private nursery would have chosen a local authority nursery if this option had been available.

Day nurseries

The most popular method of child care used by the West Indian respondents is local authority nurseries. The benefits of nurseries which were mentioned by the West Indian women interviewed are that the child has other children to play with

and that s/he is occupied with tasks which are of educational value in a supervised environment with a wide range of facilities. Also, the experience prepares the child for school and gives the mother time on her own:

"Well he misses the nursery, you know. Well he got used to stopping at home now but first time he used to be all grumpy, you know. Every morning when I'm going out he say 'mummy am I going to the nursery today', you know, and you'd say 'no Christopher you're stopping with daddy' and he'd say 'I wanna go and play with the kids'. He misses the nursery ... There he's got a lot of kids to play with. Here he hasn't got anybody to play with apart from his toys and he doesn't go out much because his dad's here all day. So he doesn't go out and meet people and that's setting him back a bit because even now he's scared. If anyone say 'come here Christopher' he's scared to go, so that's one advantage. I really would like him to go to the nursery but you know just the money."

(Would you prefer a nursery rather than a child minder?)

"Yen I'd prefer a nursery. They've got more facilities there, you know ... you've got a kid, say he's an only child, he hasn't got anyone to play with so it would be better for him at the nursery, there's kids there." (16:8)

"... Some of the children never grow up and if they go out and meet other children like at the nursery school and the play school I think it's better for them. The mother has time to relax and the children have got time to play and meet other people and it's best if the children go out and meet, you know, their own sort of size and play with them and you know do different things." (13:3)

"He benefits from the nursery because he has other children there to play with ... It's better for him to go to nursery because if the boy is at home he just runs up and down." (40:2)

"She could learn to do a lot more little scribbling and all that by the time she gets to school, you know. She's better because when she was at home all day she got bored with no-one to play. That was the reason why she didn't like coming home." (34:4)

Nurseries "do them a lot of good because they experience a lot of things, they learn a lot of things there, you know." (30:4)

"I do know now that if a child goes to a nursery I think that child is better off because, for one thing, that child learns a lot because you find that another person might have the patience to cope with that child whereas you find that the mother

gets short tempered. Say for instance if she's having a bad day you know. Whereas in the nursery ... even if you don't feel quite up to it you'll try that bit harder because you know that the children have to be looked after and you're being paid to do it. If you're not up to standard someone's going to say something, whereas at home ----- you know, you'll say 'Oh I'll try and get her to learn to count' and you know that if you're having problems you'll probably just leave it, whereas at the nursery it's continuous ... You might find that a child have a favourite nursery nurse, or whatever, who could probably get the child to do what the other person couldn't get the child to do." (36:7)

"They're better looked after (at nurseries) and they've got trained nurses down there, better equipment and everything - but they're too expensive." (13:5)

"... If they go to a nursery the nursery will help them for when they go to school. They won't have this problem, you see, like crying. They want to go home when their parents take them to school in the morning. They get used to being at the nursery from 9 till half three and it's the same time at school, you see, so they don't have this problem." (40:12)

Indeed, the most frequent complaint about day nurseries was that they are too expensive and that it is very difficult to obtain a place. For several mothers nursery care was simply not a possibility because of the expense, and others had reluctantly withdrawn their children for this reason:

"You can't pay for it (day nurseries), it's too expensive." (45:2)

"... Since I've packed up nursing I've never done a full-time job, only part-time, because if you look at it now, £10 for a child in a nursery I might just as well sit at home and look after them myself. So I've always done shift work." (33:2)

"They won't take them in the nursery unless you pay this money so he goes on nights and I do the days." (8:2)

"Cynthia left the nursery when she was almost three and then I took her to a child minder. It was getting too expensive for us cos I think it's £12 and when we took her away it was about £7 (with the minder)." (13:4)

"... Well the fee went up which I couldn't afford and I say 'well I'm not gonna pay that amount of money when his dad's at home', you know. So we sit down and he (the father) says 'well you leave Christopher here and that money you are paying you can put it aside or you can buy something with it', you know. So really I'm saving £6 a week ... I wasn't getting much help up the social services because they say they couldn't cut it down or anything, cos I even let them know I was getting F.I.S. and things like that and they still couldn't reduce it, reduce his fee." (See previous quote about the child being upset when withdrawn from nursery) (16:8)

Similarly, three mothers who had wanted their children to attend a day nursery were unable to obtain a place:

"You know I have these two children and they never been in a public nursery cos I couldn't get them a place there, at the nursery. I don't know why but there was always a long waiting list ... I always have to put them in a private nursery and it was a bit difficult with just the one, with just my pay coming in and everything, and the rent was £3 a week." (Single mother) (36:1)

"... There's nowhere to leave him, you know, because they don't take married women's children in the nursery, you know. It's only for unmarried mothers so you just have to put up with it until they go to school, at the moment." (27:5)

"... They (the nursery) wouldn't take him. At that time they wouldn't take married women's children at the nursery. I don't think they still do anyway." (24:1)

Thus, the majority of West Indian respondents felt that children benefit from attending a nursery but a number found that this form of child care was not a possibility for them because of the expense or difficulty of obtaining a place. Three of the West Indian women interviewed did, however, express concern that the staff/child ratio was inadequate:

"... they're understaffed and there's not one staff to one child to give them love ... I don't think they get enough love and care, you know." (17:3)

"Sometimes, because they're overcrowded, that one person cannot take care of all the children at the same time, you know." (18:1)

"In the nursery there's too many children there and not enough people to look after them." (33:3)

Childminding

Turning to the subject of child minding, however, a larger proportion of the black respondents expressed fears about the quality of care provided by minders. As the women had found from experience, child minders vary immensely and the three mothers who were satisfied with the care provided by minders explained their satisfaction in terms of the individual minder rather than any benefits afforded by child minding in general

"I used to take her (the daughter) in her night clothes and she (the minder) would bath her every day, wash her hair, give her her dinner and she had her back into her night clothes washed and ready for me to pick her up at half past six. She was great she was I've never seen another one like that..." (45:3)

Other respondents were not so fortunate with the child minders they used. Indeed the most frequent criticisms expressed about minders is the fact that some do not care adequately for the children, that they have housework, shopping, and other children to take care of, and again cost

"Well I used to use child minders and really they weren't very good. I think that was really why I stopped working." (Did you worry about the care the children were getting?)
"Yeh because some of them weren't any good. It's only one that was good and all the others were just in it for the money."

"... Leaving them (the children) with other people they're pushed about, you know, because some of them don't, they don't take care of your kids. They just want your back to turn and then maybe they be there for the whole day and they only get one feed or things like that. Or maybe they leave them and go to shop and they go out in the street, you know." (30:3)

"... I can't cope with these two (children) let alone four, or five or six children." (20:5)

"... Some of them haven't got much time you know --- having kids of their own as well, it's a lot of hard work and I don't think that do them (the children) good, sometime it do harm." (19:4)

... to take them to a child minder she's got to go out and do the shopping and leave them or she's got to take them with her or something and ... nurseries have got more equipment than at child minders." (42-2)

(Do you think you could have managed to continue working with a young baby?) Well I wasn't really thinking about it because I was living in Chemsly Wood and I would have to pay about five or seven pounds a week to keep her. I wouldn't have had that much."

Split-shift child care

A split-shift system of child care with the father obviously holds the big advantage of being free but here again there are disadvantages:

"Well it best to go to the nursery because --- your husband can be sleeping and anything can happen." (6-1)

"I would really like a nursery because for one thing I would get a bit more time to rest. You know so when I go to work I'm not so tired." (Mother working nights) (27-)

Thus, among the West Indian respondents nurseries were certainly the most popular form of child care, the only disadvantages mentioned being the expense, difficulty of obtaining a place and concern about staffing levels. Child minders, on the other hand, were found to vary immensely in the quality of care provided, and several respondents recognized the great demands placed on a minder who has her own domestic tasks to perform. Where the split-shift system of child care is employed one parent is caring for children after a day's paid labour.

White Respondents

Day nurseries

The high level of satisfaction with nursery care among the West Indian respondents was not however replicated in the white sample. Eleven of the white women interviewed had obtained nursery places for their children. Of these three were dissatisfied with the experience and two expressed contradictory attitudes about

nurseries. Among the women who were satisfied with the care their children had received four qualified their responses with comments about the age at which it is no longer harmful for children to attend a nursery. Indeed the most frequent objection to nurseries among the white respondents was that children should not be separated from their mother below a certain age:

"... my two been to the day nursery the last twelve months. When they were four. Before they went to school because it prepares them for school. But not at any age under four because I think they tend to need the mum more then." (22:2)

"I think up till three years old you should be with them." (41:2)

"I didn't want these to go until they were actually two, when they could ask for the pot, ask for a bottle, or their food instead of them screaming for it, you know, and nobody understanding what they wanted. So I wouldn't put her in until she was two, you know." (15:5)

"I think they're better with their mother until they're --- until they can talk and that." (2:3)

"... Some of the mothers, like the mothers on their own, they put the babies in from very small and then the babies don't seem to know, as they grow up ... who their mother is properly, you see. So I'd rather, like, stop at home and wait till the baby's grown up more ... I think rather than seeing him, you know, crying all the time in a nursery. I'd rather stop at home and wait till he goes to school properly, like I did with her." (3:5)

Other objections to nurseries were that they are understaffed, the child was constantly ill and the mother is not present to see the child develop:

"... I think the girls were nice to her but they've got too many children to look after and whenever I went there ... (and) asked if she'd been good one of them would turn round and say she'd been as good as gold and the other would turn round and say she'd been moaning all day, so you didn't really know. And there was always something wrong with her, always. If she went there for a full fortnight she'd always come home with something wrong with her, but if she had a couple of days off here she was alright. I don't know if she was fretting, she didn't like it or what. But she was always sick." (2:2)

"I think you miss a lot if you're at work. You come home from work of a night and if the child does something different you think to yourself 'when did she learn that, how did she learn to do that, I wasn't there.'" (25:5)

However, despite the high level of objection to nurseries among the white respondents, a number of benefits were also mentioned. Specifically, that nurseries prepare children for school, the child has an opportunity to learn and develop and to mix with other children:

"... I think it encourages them to socialise. I think when they start school they suddenly leave a very small group and they're not in groups of two or three but groups of 40 so they're very likely to be absolutely terrified. They are much more likely to have problems and not to be able to settle at school (if they do not attend nursery). As well as that I think you learn - children can explain things to each other better than an adult can explain to a child." (1:9)

(Were you happy about them going to nursery?)
 "Not at first, but I'm glad I made the decision because I had no trouble with the two youngest, well the oldest youngest, going to school. While the first two I had great difficulty putting them to school - they wouldn't go." (22:3)

"It'll help them for school, like." (11:4)

"... they seem to talk a lot, say a lot of words, they sing and, oh god, they meet people, they meet all different children and the teachers tell them stories and they like that. When they come home they tell me things that they do there and they bring me pictures. I think it's good for them." (31:3)

"... Before she went to nursery she was very, very quiet and shy. If anyone come in she'd hide behind a chair or something but now she's completely different. It has changed her. She wouldn't eat when she was at home, she wouldn't eat nothing all day. Since she's started nursery now she'll have a big meal at nursery and dinner when she gets home." (41:4)

"It was an advantage for her because she was too young to know what was going on and they do look after them well. In fact it's an advantage for them to go right up until school age because if you are a small family ... you don't develop so well as if you mix with other children." (23:3)

Childminding

As against these benefits of nursery care, however, none of the respondents identified any advantages of childminding. Indeed, the one mother whose children had been to a minder and foster mother was very dissatisfied with the care they received

"With the first childminder she did it purely for the money. I'm not suggesting that the children were neglected but they were just washed and fed and left in a room to play. Children don't just grow, you've got to give them the material. If they're not getting anything to sort of nourish them they just turn into little cabbages (On another occasion) I was in hospital, something wrong with my kidneys, and the children were small and Victor couldn't cope so he fostered the children. By right the children were only supposed to be there five nights a week but, fitting in his night life, he decided he'd pay the woman more to keep them weekends. All their clothes were taken, they were playing in old clothes - her old clothes - no socks on their feet, no knickers on their bums because of the extra washing you see I went there one day and there was nobody in the house. She'd buggered off shopping and left the children. Fortunately for her she'd taken my two ... I reported her and at that house they had a cot death and no-one can tell me it was caused by anything other than neglect ... You can get unscrupulous people minding children only for the money." (32:3/8)

Obviously the above experience was with two individual minders and only speaks of them. However, two respondents who have worked as minders would not use this system of child care for their children:

"I was a childminder, you see, and I saw the way they reacted when they come here, when their parents went to work." (14:2)

"I'm a registered childminder ... I like children and I hate to see what it does to them." (5:4)

In total, therefore, six of the twelve white respondents who had used nurseries or childminders were dissatisfied, or uncertain, about the care their children had received. Indeed among those who were satisfied with nurseries

four qualified their responses with comments about it being harmful to leave children below a certain age. This may relate to the earlier finding that a large proportion of white mothers believe the first five years are crucial for a child's development.

Split-shift child care

Finally, one white mother was employing a split-shift system of child care with her husband and she too found the arrangement unsatisfactory:

"... It hasn't worked out. He's come back after having worked nights and I've thought I've woken him up and have gone to work and had to ring back, or even come back, found the house in an absolute state and Alan fast asleep. And then he's been ill which has caused problems. And I've just sort of reversed my problems onto him so I still feel them just as badly. The kids are still with us so they are still not getting adequate stimulus from meeting other kids, or indeed any other interests, or any more time being spent with them doing interesting activities." (1:11)

Asian Respondents

Of the 21 Asian women interviewed nine had children who attended, or had attended, nursery school. All the mothers were satisfied with the care the child had received and many emphasised the value of nursery school in preparing the child for primary school

(What do you think is good about the nursery?)

"I don't know how the English think about it but even though I know how to speak English I don't get much use of speaking with the kids ... I always seem to be speaking with them in my own language. When the grown-ups, and my sister-in-law come over we speak English. It's only with the kids I don't ... And then at school instead of going straight to the teacher it's better if they go to a nursery then they know all about it. This one just move into school and he can understand pretty well. But if he didn't go to the nursery, if he went straight to his teacher, that make them so behind. The nursery, it's good. They make friends and enjoy themselves and play about so that fills the gap instead of being lonely with the brother and things." (20:4)

I think it's a very good idea, they can learn more, learn to sit down and many things else ... When they are five and they go in juniors and they don't know how to sit there that's a big problem if they don't go to the nursery." (44:2)

Certainly, although two respondents did mention that the nursery provided them with more time, the emphasis by the Asian women was on the educational value of nurseries rather than as child care. None of the women had obtained a nursery place for their child to enable them to engage in wage labour. This partly reflects the cultural restraints preventing Asian women from working outside the home but it is also because nursery school hours are not compatible with working hours.

Two respondents, who wanted to work outside the home, had considered obtaining a day nursery place for the children but this did not provide a solution:

(Do you think you will try to get your children into a nursery or you'll wait for them to go to school?)
... I've tried all over but it costs too much. I can't afford that. I can't afford £12. It's not worth me paying £12 cos I've got another one you see so if I start paying £12 for each I might just as well look after them myself. (17:3)

Even if I take him to the nursery it take me so long to get to the nurser, and then the other children they come home (from school) at 3.30 and if I give them the key it's dangerous. Some ladies do but I don't like to. I mean you give them the key and everybody know you go to work, all the people round know you go to work, and anything could happen, while you work, with the kids. (20:2)

Thus, rather than nurseries, the method of child care used by the working Asian mothers was relatives (3) and childminders (1). Three of these four women were, or had been satisfied with the arrangement. None of the Asian women employed a split-shift system of child care with their husband.

As previously noted, the majority of Asian respondents believed that the mother is the best person to care for the child and only four mothers had left children under the age of three with others. One respondent obtained a nursery school place for her 2½ year old child, one left an 18 month old child with a minder, one a 6 month old with her mother and, finally, one respondent entrusted her year old child with her sister. Nursery schools were valued for their educational role rather than as child care provision.

Attitude to child care

Some of the women interviewed were opposed to child care provision because they believed that a child under five needs its mother while others were dissatisfied with the child care provision they had used, or are using, because of the quality of care provided. Indeed all the women interviewed felt it is important for children to play with others, although four qualified their answers with comments about the behaviour of the child's friends - they felt it beneficial for children to mix if their friends are well behaved. The opportunity for children to mix and play with others was identified as an important advantage of nurseries. Indeed the level of satisfaction with nurseries was higher than with other forms of provision, particularly among West Indian mothers. An objection to day nurseries frequently expressed by white, but not West Indian, mothers was that children should not be separated from their mother below a certain age and this difference reflects the earlier finding that a majority of white, but only five West Indian, respondents believe that the first five years of a child's life are crucial to their subsequent development. None of the Asian women had used day nursery provision. Where child care was necessary, while an Asian mother worked outside the home, relatives were the most common method of substitute

care employed. The mothers of Asian children attending nursery school emphasized the educational, rather than custodial, value of such provision.

A number of respondents who were dissatisfied with the child care they are using, or had used, felt they would have been satisfied with a different form of provision. In particular the expense and difficulty of obtaining a day nursery place eliminated the possibility of this form of provision for many women. As noted in an earlier chapter, insufficient day nursery provision exists in Birmingham and places are reserved for children who are defined as 'deprived' in some way. Moreover, Birmingham's means-tested maximum charge is substantially higher than that of many other local authorities. Similarly, the hours provided by nursery schools make this provision unsatisfactory for working mothers. Child minders are expensive and quality of care provided varies enormously. Thus, many mothers were dissatisfied with the form of child care they used simply because they did not have a choice. This situation is explained by a white mother who is dissatisfied with the split-shift arrangement she has with her husband:

"Yes I did try other things but there was nothing else I can do. I was told you have to be a social priority for day nurseries - even just for one day a week - you had to be a single mum, with problems and with a job ... Anyway even with these social priority mums nearly every nursery has got about 60 priority mums on their waiting list. Nursery schools, they start at three so that was only applicable for Caris and that only started anyway part-time for a bit. When she changes school she'll have to go part-time, she'll have to wait until her turn comes to start. I tried for a private, what's it ----- community nursery, and was told that my children had to be out of nappies and dry as well as feeding themselves and quite forward in a lot of ways and for the middle one in particular that didn't seem on. Childminders, it was difficult to get hold of one and anyway by the time I'd found out what the costs were I couldn't possibly have afforded anything." (So you didn't have any choice?) "No, the only way I could have worked was if Alan (husband) was prepared to look after them. (1-10/11)

6. CONFLICT BETWEEN ROLES OF WIFE/MOTHER AND PAID WORKER

A mother who works outside the home fulfils the role of both paid worker and domestic labourer. Often both a physical and emotional conflict arises when these two roles are combined. By physical conflict I mean simply the actual physical exertion which is involved, and emotional conflict arises when the mother feels that her paid labour results in her not adequately performing the role of a 'good' mother as she defines this role.

Physical Conflict

The physical exertion involved is likely to vary depending on the extent to which the father participates in domestic labour. Consequently the respondents were asked whether the father of their child ever performs, or performed, the following: bathing the child/ren, changing a nappy, getting the child/ren up and dressed in the morning and getting up in the night if the child is crying. The frequency with which the father performed these tasks was not probed in great depth. Neither was a distinction made between how much he does when the mother is working outside the home compared to when she is not. However, many of the comments elicited (e.g. 'He says that's not a man's job') indicated that there would not be a significant difference between these two situations, and this impression was confirmed by the few women who were questioned in more detail about the changed situation.

West Indian Respondents

Father's participation in child care

All but three of the West Indian respondents had worked outside the home while they had pre-school children. Ten of the mothers had not been living with the father of their child when the child was young. Of the remaining twenty-one, thirteen

of the mothers said that the father of the child had, or does, perform all of the four domestic tasks listed above. Moreover, the majority of these respondents felt that the father did the jobs willingly, without being asked. However, there was nevertheless the implication that it was the woman's responsibility and that the husband deserved praise for 'helping' when the mother was busy, tired, ill, or out of the house:

And does he do it all without you asking?

Yes. He only want to know they re not done, and I'm doing something, he'll change them, tidy them up and put them to bed. (13-16)

... If I'm tired, you know, and go and lie down and he see I'm sleeping and it come up to their bed time he'll do them. (45-16)

... He's very helpful apart from when I'm here now. He's sort of let lose, let me do everything, you know, but he still helps. (16-16)

Five of the West Indian respondents said their husband had performed two or three of the tasks mentioned and three of the husbands had never done any. Generally these women did not feel that their husband's inactivity required explanation although one mentioned that her husband simply says "that's not a man's job". Indeed 17 of the respondents felt their husbands do enough, although two qualified this by implying it is the woman's job, and one that if her husband did more she would feel guilty:

"Oh I've got to admit he do as much as I when he's here, when he's around. I get a break like when Dorne was a baby, when she was small, he would make her bottle and things like that but knowing me I always say it's not right, I'd rather do it myself. Even in here with cooking, if he volunteers I say 'No I'd rather do it'. (1-24)

Do you think he ought to do more?

Well I ain't bothered really. I like bathing them, or even the younger ones, you know, the bigger one would help me. I don't depend on him to bath them or anything." (2-11)

'Do you think your husband does enough for the children, or should he do more?'

'He cant really. If he does anymore ---- I should do more ... Mind you I think I've got a guilty conscience and I should keep that to myself.' (33:1)

A further two respondents thought their husbands could not do more because of their work, and only two felt they should do more

'if he has the time I think he should (do more), if he has the time. (You don't feel he has the time really?) "Well when he comes home from work most things are done ... Before I go to work I tidy him and put his pyjamas on and give him a drink." (Would you like your husband to do that when he came in rather than you having to do it?) "Oh yes Then he complains that he is tired." (27:9)

'I think he should (do more), you see, but I don't think he want to.' (37)

When questioned earlier about the characteristics of a good father the most common response, among the West Indian women, was that he should do the same things for the child as done by the mother. In this section it was found that the majority of West Indian respondents felt their husbands do sufficient in the way of domestic labour. However, the following quotes from the mothers, giving accounts of the physical effort involved in performing wage labour in addition to motherhood, indicate that their husbands do not participate equally.

(Saying that women work harder than men but that her husband would probably disagree)

'I come off night work and I get the children off to school - get them their breakfast, comb their hair, get them off to school. I come back and tidy up in here and I go to bed. I'll wake up just after 12, do the dinners and when he come in at 2 o'clock and find me sleeping here he always say 'Sleeping Beauty again, all she ever do is sleep', but he doesn't think that I come in and I get the kids off to school and his dinner is cooking in the oven. He doesn't think about how I do that. All he ever think about is 'there she is, she's sleeping again'. Only about a few weeks ago he said 'I never see you', and I said 'What do you mean?'. He said 'every time I come in this house you either just wake up or you asleep'.' (45:9)

(Another mother who works nights)

"I come home in the mornings and I've got to, you know, look after him (the child), bath him, you know, do him something to eat and take him out for a walk, you know. I'm still tired, I still have to do it. Sometimes I fall asleep. When he was small, when he was say from a few months or weeks to about a year, he was alright, you know ... because he used to sleep a lot. Then it wasn't any problem. I'd come home, bath him, feed him, you know, get him comfortable and he would sleep for hours - but now he doesn't. If I try to keep him in the room with me he's all over me, he pulls my hair, he dig out my eyes, he say 'mummy, mummy open your eyes, don't do that, don't do that'. And I'm so tired. He doesn't want me to go to sleep. He get lonely when he's on his own, you see, he gets really lonely. And there's nowhere to leave him ... (about nurseries not taking married women's children)." (27:5)

"Well I was leaving her with a childminder, you know, but it was a bit too much because I was working in West Bromwich and I gotta get the bus, you know, come off and leave the baby and then walk a long distance, you know. It was too much cos I gotta do the cooking and washing when I get home." (4:1)

"I think here the woman works harder (than her husband) ---- because they got double work to do, you see. They work harder and I think that's why you got so many people got nervous breakdowns, you know ---- With me right now I have to be on some capsules ... for me nerves, you see, because if I don't have them I cant sleep most of the time and I think that's caused by working and having the kids and things. You get less rest than the man because he get up and he went out to work and he do a day's work and he come back in and that's it. But you - you've got to work before you go to work, you coming back from work you gotta be working again. So you do twice as much as what he did for one day ... The majority (of men) doesn't want to do nothing more than go out to work and that's it." (37:13)

(Child came out in spots one evening and was sick)

"and all through the night she didn't sleep and I was tired after working eight hours ... She was just coughing, every half an hour, and the hour. She want water, she want to go to the toilet, and that's when she need a father because I had to get up and take it out on her. I say 'Oh your dad should be here. Why me? Every time you ill he never here'. Things like that really gets me. In the morning ... I had to come out the bed for quarter past six, give her water ... I'm dying to sleep. I say 'Oh Dorne mummy tired'. She say 'I want some water, I want to go to the toilet' and I said, then I start on her - I said 'your dad should be here, I'm fed up of this now'." (1:14)

Responses such as the above constantly reaffirmed the impression that it is the woman who takes responsibility for domestic labour and child care - the man 'helps'. Working mothers in this country perform two roles virtually unaided. Several women contrasted this situation with that which exists in the West Indies where children participate more in domestic labour and others are available to help:

"In the West Indies if you even go to work you have more rest, but in this country you have no rest, you have to go to work, you have to do everything by yourself. You see in this country you do it yourself but in the West Indies the kids are more helpful to you, in the West Indies. Cos they go out now and they know them to get up in the morning to do the dishes. When they done the dishes they sweep the yard, they do everything. They get the water before they went to school They do everything, but in this country oh no, they kids, them don't want to do nothing in the house. They just want to have their own way, you see. So in the West Indies you get more help. And if you doing this thing and somebody passing you, you say 'come here, help me do this' and they will but here you have to do your shopping, come back do your cleaning, you have to do this, you have to do that. You see in the West Indies, if you have a big house there, you see somebody you say 'come and do this for me, do that' they will done it you see while you doing the next. You have the clothes to wash ---- you say to a woman 'come and do washing, wash me clothes, come in'. That is a day work she put in. (Then do you pay her?) Then you pay her. And they do the washing today and tomorrow they do ironing. That's a two day work she do. But over here you have nobody to say 'do this for me and I'll pay you'. You have to wash, iron, clean, do everything you see. You work harder here more than in the West Indies." (1:9)

White Respondents

Father's participation in child care

Among the white respondents, who had lived with the father while the child had been young, four said their husband would do all four of the listed tasks, five said he had performed two or three of them, two fathers had only done one of the jobs mentioned and two had not done any. Moreover, the comments elicited again indicated that the man 'helps', rather than shares responsibility.

"I've never really asked him to." (2:10)

"He'll do it if I was doing something else." (9:35)

"He would if he had to but, as I say, if I was here I'd have to do it." (11:17)

"He'll do all those kind of things, you know, if I feel a bit tired or run down sometimes. You know he'll do little jobs like that for me, he enjoys it ... if I'm occupied doing one job and I ask him to do something he'll do it for me." (21:11/12)

"I have to get all the clothes organized and put out - separated out - because else he claims he didn't know what fitted what, and he took such a long time they threw it all on the floor and wrecked the things. He refuses to do it now." (1:15)

Nevertheless, eight of the thirteen respondents were of the opinion that their husband does enough, although two qualified their responses:

"Do you think that really he ought to do more, or he does enough?" "He's not too bad really with the kids, you know, because ---- well if you ask him to do something he'll do it, I never ask him, it just come automatically, comes to me to do it." (You think it should be you that's doing it?) "Yeh" (2:10)

"He doesn't do a thing ... About once a week I might get a cup of tea and that's a special occasion!" (So do you think he ought to do more?) "No. He's more trouble than he's worth. I don't want him to do more." (32:22)

Five of the white women interviewed, however, were not satisfied with the amount their husbands participate in domestic labour and child care. Two did not specify what they wanted their husband to do, two wanted him to take the children out more often and one thought that "if I'm a bit bloody knackered and tired he should say 'don't worry, I'll do it'." (15:15) In the last case although the husband is not working he will not collect the children from the school gate. As a result the mother cannot work:

... There's all the women down there and of course he's the only man and, of course, he wants to stand the other side of the road. I was annoyed about that cos I think she (the daughter) could get excited and just run across. He says it's a woman's job. (15:2)

Thus, as with the West Indian women, domestic labour and child care were defined as the woman's responsibility with husbands 'helping' rather than sharing. Working mothers, unlike working fathers, perform the role of domestic labourer in addition to their role as wage worker. The following accounts from a single and a married working mother describe experiences which it is unlikely many working fathers would share:

"After she was born I went back to work when she was six weeks old and I was in a bit of a state because I didn't give my body time to recuperate after the birth. I was doing too much. I used to get up at five thirty in the morning, bottle feed, bath, change, get the pram ready, get myself ready, get to work for 9 o'clock, but I had to get to the nursery before - which, the nursery was a god send My day was a twenty hour day, not a twelve hour or fourteen hour day. I used to get in from work about 6.30 with the child and by the time I'd settled her down and took my coat off it was 7 o'clock and I'd have to start feeding, bathing, changing, so that was going on for an hour and a half. Then I'd start cleaning up, then I'd start cooking my meal and then it was about 10 o'clock before I sat down for a meal. And then after that I'd be clearing up again and getting ready for the following day which took me through to midnight. I did that for 18 months and it was just too much. I had a physical breakdown at the end of it. I ended up, not in hospital, but I was quite ill. I developed peritonitis of the hip I got back on my feet and ----- I didn't go back to work straight away. I er ----- I don't like social security, having to have hand outs, but when you're ill there's nothing else you can do"

(What sort of job were you doing before?)

"It wasn't so much the job that was killing me. It was what I did before I went to work and what I did after work. The job was a receptionist job and it was quite an easy going job but I was falling asleep over the switchboard and things like this and getting my calls mixed up. I was so tired, to keep going, I was always tired. I'm not a very strong person anyway. I used to be before I had the baby. I could go for days on end without sleep but when I had the baby I didn't think it would knock me about that way, but it did." (23:2/3)

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"... If you're working and trying to bring up children - you've virtually got two full-time jobs, even if it is just part-time. When you come back you are expected to take over the children If the children are ill you've got terrific anxiety if you want to take time off from work. You tend to find that ----- well I found personally that I got resentment from the other people I worked with. They were being criticised if they were late while if I was late, because I had to take the kids to the doctor or had to do something, they felt that it was favouritism by the manager rather than him being sympathetic to my difficulties. When I went to the doctor because I was sick he wouldn't give me a National Health certificate and ... what he wrote down was a nonsense. If I hadn't got a sympathetic boss he would have sacked me. It didn't say that I went to the doctor because I was ill, which I was at that time, it just said that I wanted to be with the children..." (1:2/3)

Asian Respondents

Father's participation in child care

Among the Asian respondents a majority (11) of the women said their husbands did not do any of the listed tasks, eight said he did two or three and only two that he did all four. Moreover, whereas comments from the West Indian and white women indicated that they felt their husbands should 'help' with domestic labour, among the Asian women interviewed the most frequent comment made was that it is the wife's job and that she should not expect the man to participate:

"It's my responsibility ... If I'm not here or if I'm doing cooking or something like that I notice the nappy before I start cooking, or before I go out. I change the nappy cos I know I'm supposed to." (20:4)

(About the man getting up in the night to see to the children)
"No my husband (does not) because that is too much for the man. He do hard work." (5:3)

"I never give him the chance really. It's the lady's job. Why should man do it?" (44:4)

Similarly when asked whether they felt their husband does enough the majority (18) of the Asian respondents thought his lack of participation acceptable because it is not his job:

"I don't agree with the men come home and do a lot of work ... there's enough work for him (in terms of his paid labour.)" (27)

"He do alright. He have to work as well. Lady's duty to do it." (71)

... In my life I thinking husband is just like a god to me. If he stay with me that nice. He work outside the home. I cant expect him to do that and wash dishes for me. That's not a good idea ... I'm not interested in that - telling my husband to wash the dishes for me - that's not a man's job. I'm not interested in that." (44:5/6)

Three of the Asian respondents, however, did feel that their husbands should do more in the house although the demands of two of the women were minimal:

"Yes he should do (more). Even if it's only once a week he should take them out. All the week he's at work and the one day he could do that." (65:5)

"He should at least find time to play with them." (47:4)

One respondent, on the other hand, appeared very dissatisfied with her husband's lack of contribution to domestic labour:

"He should do more ... In the morning I get up at 8 o'clock cos I cant sleep after 8. He stays in the bed till 10 or 11 sometimes. They (the children) run up and down and sometimes he gets fed up and tells me to keep them downstairs ... He should do more. On Friday nights when he goes out he leaves home about 7 p.m., he back sometimes 12 at night, sometimes 11. But on Saturday night he went out before you came, he come back 11. On Sunday it's 9 or 10 because he has to go to work on Monday. Three nights he have a good time I think. I say why shouldn't woman have good time but he says 'well you can come to the pub with me'. He know I wouldn't go. He just say it for a laugh, he knows I wouldn't Sometime he could understand how much work lady have to do, working on the machine (homeworking) as well. Sometime I think he doesn't really know. Last night he come home about 12, I went to bed about 11.30 because I said I'm not going to wait for him. I think he should come earlier." (41:7)

Despite the above quote however, the vast majority of the Asian respondents, including the few who engaged in wage work, felt that it is their duty to take responsibility for domestic labour and child care. Moreover, this attitude obviously corresponds with the section on sex role perception where it was found

that the majority of the Asian women interviewed believed the husband's role to be outside the home while the woman's is rooted firmly in the domestic sphere. The result of this belief is that women who engage in wage work have, in addition, sole responsibility for the house and children. Three respondents combined the roles by doing paid work at home:

"Usually I didn't like outside because I have to look after the kid as well. Go outside (to work) and leave my mess like that. When you stay inside you do your work and clean your house as well." (44:1)

Five of the Asian respondents worked, or had worked, outside the home while their children had been young and had thereby combined the role of domestic worker and wage labourer. The inequality of the situation is described by one respondent:

"Women work more hard than men. It's only a light job but you have to clean the house, this and that. The work comes more like work really than the man. Men don't have much responsibility. They say they the boss (laughs) but it just the custom says they're the boss in the house like. Otherwise it seems to be the lady running the house and everything. I mean the lady that go out to work when she come home she have to run the house. I mean she do double then." (20:6)

Fathers' participation in child care

A wide variation existed between the degree of participation in child care of fathers of different races. Thus while thirteen of the twenty-one West Indian fathers do, or did, all four listed tasks the respective proportions for the white and Asian men were 4/13 and 2/21.

Despite this variation, however, the majority of respondents of all ethnic groups were satisfied with the amount of help they received. Indeed, although Asian men participated least, the degree of satisfaction expressed by the Asian mothers was the highest and this reflects the cultural definition of the role of men

which defines their responsibilities towards their families as primarily limited to that of breadwinner. The white and West Indian respondents also perceived child care as primarily their responsibility but expected a degree of assistance from the father. Certainly, amongst all three ethnic groups, the major burden of child care was performed by the women: it was only the degree of 'help' they received which varied between groups.

Emotional Conflict

In addition to the physical effort involved in performing the role of wage worker and domestic labourer, moreover, the ideology of motherhood conflicts with that of paid work and many of the women interviewed experienced this dilemma. Some respondents experienced guilt because they felt children suffer if they are separated from the mother, other respondents found difficulty in concentrating on the two roles, others felt that they did not see their child/ren enough or that they were too tired to care for the child/ren adequately while some of the women interviewed were dissatisfied with the type of child care available. The following quotes illustrate the emotional conflicts experienced by working mothers:

"I think they do suffer (if the mother works) but I don't like to talk about that because otherwise I get depressed because I think that these children have been deprived, you know, because I did go to work. But there again if I did stay at home I wouldn't have been a nurse so there's no solution. Even if I had another child now I would have to figure some way of getting back to work, even if it was only part-time. I wouldn't like to give up my job. There again I don't think it's such a good idea as far as the financial situation is concerned because all the bills mounting up and it's very hard I think for one person to earn enough ... (But) I tend to feel that they have lost something ... because I wasn't around when they were quite young - I had to leave them with someone else ... I feel that I've missed out on that baby relationship." (West Indian 29 3/14)

your housework to do as well as your work
You've got to work hard by yourself doing overtime."

"I go back to work when he was about six weeks ----- then I couldn't -----" (you felt bad about it) "Yes, he was only tiny and he wasn't well at all. I was taking him out in the cold and so I just pack it in." (How long did you work for?) "For about three months and then I said no. He wouldn't walk ... The lady in the house used to look after him for me in the evening because I used to go out from 5 p.m. till 9 p.m. and he would walk for them. He wouldn't for me. I think he was frightened really because I used to leave him, you see, so I stopped doing that and stay home. And he got up one day and there's me sitting there and he's walking, and I say that's what he wanted all the while, me to stay home' ... He was fighting me." (West Indian 29 7)

They do (suffer). Mine did. I don't mind admitting. I knew I was wrong and I put myself right. They've got to suffer. The first five years of a child's life are very important and if you're not there to help them it affects their whole way of life. I've learnt by some of my mistakes. The fact that mum and dad were divorced, me mum always had to work so we were left to bring up ourselves and I think that was wrong. There's something missing in your life and I didn't want that to happen to my children, you know." (White 22:2)

"At those early stages to leave the children all day, early morning till late at night, which was what I did, it was wrong." (White 23:14)

It's not that they suffer. It's just when you're at work you keep thinking about them all and I think you would be better if you stop at home. (West Indian 2 :2)

(Did you consider working at all with a young child?) "Well I tried it after the second child came. I tried it for about three weeks and it just didn't work out. I couldn't cope with the children and a day job anyway. If I got me mind on the job the children were neglected and I thought 'well I'll leave until they're old enough to be left' sort of thing." (White 22)

"When she was in the nursery she cried, you know. Every morning I took her she cried until the last week when she settled down. But when she cried I used to think about her at work all day - 'Is she okay'." (White 3:6)

(Asian mother who works at home) "At home you can't work with the children because when they start crying and that you stop, you know, and you get sort of confused. When you're at home you've got your housework to do as well as your work. You've got to work hard by yourself doing overtime." (17 1)

"... the only thing that I feel sorry about is that I'm not here with him ... Well only at night. He'll probably see me for about four hours and then he go to bed, and then wake in the morning I'm going out. When I come home at night he's almost asleep, you know." (West Indian 15:7)

(How old was Natalie when you were working?)

"She was nine months and it was the strain of not seeing her all day and of a night I'd be tired and I hadn't got much patience and, you know, it wasn't fair I'd been off for two days, and I was going back on the Wednesday. I was due in at 10 o'clock. I shut her upstairs and come down and while I was in the kitchen she fell down the stairs from top to bottom and her poor lip was all bust and everything. So we took her up the hospital and she had her head x-rayed and it was really frightening because she screamed, screamed all night. I said to my husband 'that's it, I'm not leaving her anymore, I'm not going to work again. It's not fair rushing all the time, not having time for her'. So I packed it in and was at home for about four months, so for about two months, and then I said we could do with a bit extra money, you know, so I put my name down at Lucas and I was lucky because I got in about 3 or 4 weeks and that was great because it sort of fit in with my husband's time of coming in from work." (25:3 White)

"I left him with a woman and I wasn't very happy about that ---- There wasn't anything I could do about that because there wasn't someone that I really know, no relatives He was not looked after well, anyway not to my satisfaction." (As a result the woman left her job) (19:2)

Perception of the Roles of Wife and Mother

In this Chapter I have examined the interpretation of gender roles as presented by my sample of West Indian, Asian and white mothers. Specifically I have considered their perception of the roles of wife/husband and mother/father and their attitude to, and experience of, child care provision.

The majority of the respondents were married or desired marriage. For the Asian women, however, marriage was a necessity since there is no place within Asian society for an unattached woman. The Asian mothers were uncompromising in their view that the role of women is within the home, devoting their lives to the care of their husbands and children, while men

are responsible for providing financial support. The distinct roles of men and women, as interpreted by the Asian respondents, were perceived as the result of 'natural' or 'inherent' differences. By contrast the majority of the white and West Indian mothers interviewed rejected the idea that men and women are bestowed with distinct 'natural' abilities and a number questioned the equity of a rigid sexual division of labour although did not seriously challenge this situation.

An apparent conflict between a belief in family planning and the reality of unplanned pregnancies was evident amongst all three ethnic groups. This resulted from ignorance of conception and contraception, mistrust of existing methods of contraception, and objection to abortion on both moral and health grounds. In addition, cultural and family pressures further reduced control of fertility amongst Asian women. Nevertheless few respondents regretted having had children.

Although physical care of the child was the characteristic of a 'good' mother most frequently mentioned by all three ethnic groups, cultural differences in attitude to, and experience of, parenthood were evident. The vast majority of Asian mothers interviewed felt it is always best if a child is cared for by their biological mother, they thought it right for mothers to devote their lives to their children, and only four Asian mothers had left children below the age of 3 for long periods of the day with others. By contrast only half of the West Indian sample believed that it is best if a child is cared for by their biological mother, and only six of the white and West Indian respondents felt that a mother should devote her life to her children. Only three West Indian mothers had not worked outside the home while they had pre-school children and they expressed a high level of satisfaction with local authority day nurseries. Many white mothers,

however, objected to day nurseries because they believed that children should not be separated from their mother below a certain age.

Despite ethnic variations in fathers' participation in child care, the three groups of women shared a common experience of being primarily responsible for the care of children. As the following Chapter describes children were perceived by my respondents, of all ethnic origins, as the major restraint on their employment options. Cultural variations in the interpretation of gender roles, however, result in a different attitude towards, and experience of, paid employment.

CHAPTER II

EXPERIENCE OF PAID LABOUR

While Chapter 7 considered the employment characteristics of West Indian, Asian and White women in Britain generally this Chapter assesses the particular employment situation of my sample in Handsworth. Reasons for working or not working are considered and the evidence supports the argument that differences in the economic activity rates of the three groups of women cannot be explained solely in terms of economic factors. Cultural differences in the interpretation of gender roles must also be recognised. This Chapter also considers the education and qualifications of respondents, their employment patterns and examines the women's own perceptions of constraints on their choice of work.

1. REASONS FOR WORKING/NOT WORKING

The most obvious explanation as to why women work is because of financial necessity, because their husbands do not earn sufficient to financially support the family. However, as described in Chapter 7, Smith, in his report of the national P.E.P. survey, did not find a correlation between male earnings and female employment among the different racial groups. Thus, although Pakistani men are concentrated in the lowest level jobs and receive lower earnings than whites, West Indians and Indians a smaller proportion of Pakistani women are employed outside the home compared with the other groups. Similarly, amongst my sample it was found that although male earnings were similar the percentages of West Indian, white and Asian women working varied considerably. Using the figures obtained in 1976 by Rex and Tomlinson, 56 per cent of West Indian, 55 per cent of Asian, and 44 per cent of the white men earned less than £2,500 p.a. while

82 per cent of West Indian, 13 per cent of Asian and 10 per cent of the white women were engaged in economic activity at the time. Moreover, even if it is accepted that women do simply work for the money provided by employment this in itself can have different implications. For example, to help relieve the husband's responsibility as breadwinner and/or to provide the woman with a degree of financial independence. It is therefore necessary to consider in some detail why women work, wish to work, or do not work.

West Indian Respondents

At the time of my 1978 interviews 21 of the 31 West Indian respondents were employed outside the home, eleven working full-time and ten part-time. The ten women who were not engaged in economic activity all wanted to work.

Escape from the boredom and isolation of domesticity

When asked why they work, or want to work, the most common response was because of the boredom and isolation of domesticity:

"I don't think I could sit in the house all day. No. Because now that all my children are going to school I couldn't just sit here all day and really do nothing. What would I do, just sit around ... You get bored ... (When on holiday) the second week I start ... getting tired of sitting in the house cos I'm not the sort of person like not doing anything ... Most people go to work in the days so I haven't got any friends I could even go to. They're at work during the day, then at night when they come from work well they're tired as well and sort of getting everything ready to go to bed." (19.5, working full-time)

"... It's not for the money but you get bored being at home. Being the way I am, keeping to myself, you do get bored stopping at home doing the same thing. I used to clean the house over and over again, you know, everything was spotless and I used to do all myself up for him coming home from work in the evening and I get sick of it (laughs)." (39.9, working full-time)

"... I wanted to experience what it's all about out there, you know, and meet with other people, you know, instead of staying in the house and looking at the four walls" (18:1, not working)

"... Sitting at home all day you get bored doing nothing ... That's one thing this job's got - I don't have to sit here day after day and say 'Oh I wish I'd got a job', you know, sitting here bored to death. At least it's a job I can go out during the day and come in. I don't have to be stuck in these four walls, you know, all day like." (16:7, working full-time)

"... this flat is mad, it's enough to drive you mad. It's very lonely, you know. Sometimes you don't see your neighbour for months, you only see them by accident in the lift, you know." (Do you see anyone during the day?)

"No nobody comes to me really. I don't see people up here that much ... In a flat it's too cut off from people, you know, and it makes you become scared in yourself because since I living here I ever so scared. My door on lock. If I was living in a house I wouldn't be scared ... You have to think 'Who's there?' because someone could come and hurt you and no-one knows."

(And do you go out visiting at all?)

"Yes, yes (laughs). When I was coming from nursery I see a lady that live nearby and I said 'I can't stop' ... If you was living in a maisonette or house your next-door neighbour would come when you put the clothes out but you don't see no-one here." (17:4, not working)

"... I can't stay in the house day in and day out watching telly. Sometime I don't even bother to watch television, I just read books and when I read books my head aches a lot. So that's it. I can't concentrate on what I'm doing so I just fed up and feel like to just hit her but I don't - I feel like doing but I don't. I don't hit her. I control meself. If I don't control meself I think I go barmy." (10:10, not working)

"... I just idling, just do the housework and just get fed up with the housework." (So is it just that you'd like to get out of the house?)
"Yes I'd like to get out the house, just get out the house and meet friends, people again, and make more friends." (12:2, not working)

"... I've never gone without a job because it would just kill me. It's not that I'm crazy for the money but I'd rather go out and do two hours cleaning ----- than sit at home doing nothing, cos you may as well put me to bed." (33:2, working part-time)

(When she was not working Daphne's boyfriend asked her what she did during the day) "and I said 'Oh I sleep some day. I take Dorne to school, come back, just put my nightdress on and go straight in the bed'. It's true. Stop in bed for about half a day. I take Dorne to school and go to bed. I get up and have something to eat and go back to the bed and don't get out again - I won't get out again until about 3 o'clock, get ready, put the tea on and go and fetch Dorne and come back. And when I come back I just give her something to eat, have something for myself and go back to me bed. This telly was in the bedroom. I was bored. I come home and reach home about quarter to four and you can guarantee I am in that bed by quarter past four. I used to sit in the bed, eat what I got to eat, put the plate down (laughs) and I'd be bored. Have the telly on and I'm sleeping. I could never do it again. The lady next door ... she said to me 'How is work?' and I said 'Oh great, can't be better you know' and she said to me 'Have they think about keeping you?' and I said 'No I'm still on temp' and she said 'I bet it's boring for you going in every morning and not knowing where you stand' and I said 'Yes it is but I know that I'm still there you know'. She said 'What if they lay you off, what will you do?' so I said 'don't think that Can you imagine me coming in here, taking Dorne to school, and coming back. Stopping here eight hours a day. It would really get me down if that ever happened. I would just have to look another job if they sack me, you know'."

(16, working full-time)

Absence of social life

A common reason for wanting to work, given by the West Indian women interviewed, was that it provides an opportunity for friendship and communication. Those respondents who were not working outside the home often felt lonely and isolated during the day, and amongst all respondents, both working and unemployed, few went out other than 'occasionally' in the evenings. Of the married respondents only five went out regularly in the evening without their husbands. Three of these went to church on their own and one had started going out with women friends:

(Do you go out at all in the evenings?)

"Not during the week, not really."

(At weekends?) "At weekends I try to."

(Where do you go?) "Well we go to the local pub first and then we've found this club called Samathas and we've been going up there. We've been going up to the one on Soho Road called Rialto." (Do you go with your husband?) "Well we're trying

a lady's night on Friday (laughs) and then on Saturday we're out with the fellas." (Does your husband mind you going out without him?) "Well he did at first but I think he's learning to accept it (laughs)." (And does he go out without you?) "Yes (laughs that's why we decided)." (Do you mind him going out without you?) "Well it's not a case of you not minding. They go even if you mind. They still go ... They don't ask you. They just go and say 'I'm going' and go." (13:5)

The above respondent's comment about husbands not needing their wives' permission to go out was reiterated by other respondents who saw this as acceptable although, at the same time, accepted that it is not "proper" for women to go out in the evening without their husbands or boyfriends:

(Did you go out at all last week?) "No, no." (And does your boyfriend go out much?) "Well he goes out mostly at weekends, not always, if there's a special thing on he'll go but he doesn't make it regular like going out week after week, night after night. You know, week night he stop in, just weekends." (Do you mind him going out without you?) "Well ----- I don't mind really. Well to tell the truth ----- I don't mind." (Would he mind if you went out without him?) "Yes, yes he does. Even if I go to my friend's he says 'Well you shouldn't go and stop so long' ... Sometimes I just put my coat on and go out, and he says 'You should let me know where you're going. You never know what might happen' ... And of a night he does mind if I say 'I'm going out with a friend'. He says 'No. If it's a girl friend you're not going because of men'. You know what men are like outside if they see two girls together, they think 'Ummm', so he doesn't like me going out. If it's in the daytime to a friend that's alright so long as he know I'm going out, but at night no, I don't mind because it's right isn't it?" (16-10/11)

(Husband goes to the pub once or twice a week) (And what do you feel about him going out without you - do you mind at all?) "I don't mind ... He can go to London as long as he's back for the night because I cannot sleep on me own..." (What does he feel if you go out on your own?) "I never go out on me own because I say it's not proper I think for a married woman to be out on their own. That's my idea you know ..." (Would he dislike it if you did go out on your own?) "I think he would. In fact I think he have the same idea as me because he seen what happen to some of his mates. They sit down and let their wives go out on their own and, what happens, you see they end up in divorce court and he don't believe in divorce and, umm, I don't think he'd let me if I wanted to." (39-14)

(Does he (husband) go out without you?) "Well like men all over, you know ... they need to go out." (Do you mind him going out without you?) "Well I suppose I don't mind if he want to go. You know, men all the world round want to go out. You cant tell them they mustn't go." (Would he mind if you went out without him?) "It depends on where you're going doesn't it? (He wouldn't like it if you went to a pub?) "Well I wouldn't, would I?" (44 4)

(Would you like to go out more?) "I wouldn't mind but, um, (laughs) it's different now (since marriage) ... It's not so much the children cos I can get someone to babysit but even if I want to go and he (husband) doesn't want to go we have to stay in, you know, just for peace (laughs). It has to be neutral (laughs)." (29 6)

In addition to the belief that it is improper for women to go out in the evening without their boyfriends or husbands, other reasons given for the respondents' limited social life were that they have no friends (4), no-one to baby-sit (4), no time (2) and because their father does not allow them out (2). However, whatever the reasons, few respondents did socialize in the evenings and this possibly emphasises the importance of company and friendship during the day at work.

If relieved of financial necessity of work

Certainly the survey evidence suggests that the women interviewed were motivated to work, or wanting to work, by factors in addition to the wage. Thus, when asked whether they would continue to work outside the home if their husband earned sufficient money to support the family, or if social security payments were adequate, 14 of the 21 working respondents said they would continue working the same hours as present, five would cut their hours and two did not know how they would react.

Desire for financial independence

When questioned about why they would continue to work two responses were received: because "I would be bored stiff at home" and because "I like my own money". Twenty nine of the 31 West Indian respondents thought it important for a wife

(or cohabitee) to have money that she has earned herself. A minority of the black interviewees felt that a wife's earnings are important because one wage is not sufficient, but for the majority financial independence meant not having to rely on their husband.

(Do you think it's important for a wife, or a woman living with a man, to have money she has earned herself?)

"Yes because then she can feel she's somebody. She hasn't got to depend on anybody. Some men are alright but there's some of them, well, even if you're married to them or living with them you've got to ask them for your housekeeping. They make you feel you're begging, you're begging them for it. I don't think that's right. It makes the woman feel small, as if she's second best or something like that." (38:28, single)

"Yes." (Why?) "Because you've got more independence that way, you know, and you've got your own money coming in just in case your husband don't feel like giving you any money. You can tell him what to do with his money and you know you've got your own in your pocket and you can go and spend it yourself." (40:26, single)

"Oh yes definitely. Oh I think it's my main reason (for working) really because when I was carrying Sean ... I packed up completely and I didn't have enough stamps on my card --- so I had to depend on my husband for pocket money and ---- £5's no good to me.... It's just not on. When I get my wages tonight I can do anything I want. I pay the gas bill and I do the water rate, that's the only bills I do in the house - he does the rest - and I put a fiver away and the rest's mine. I can buy anything for the kids I want, and anything for myself. You know it's really nice having your own money." (33:29, married)

"Yes" (Why's that?) "... When a wife is working she have her own money, she is independent, she can buy whatever she want and nobody to account to. But when you've gotta wait ---- It not that your husband is always willing to give up every time you go and ask and if I earn my own money I can buy anything. My husband cant say 'Don't buyit' cos it my money. He cant stop me from spending my money ... When you've got your own money you're quite independent, you can do what you like with it." (19:3, married)

"I think so definitely." (Why's that?) "Well I don't like everything you want you gotta go and ask you husband - can you have that pair of shoes" I used to go through that, you know. He may look at you and say 'Well you've already ten'. You know what I mean. But if you've got your own money you can just go and buy it and you don't have to ask. And then things in the house like you've got to settle for what you really need but if you're working you can always buy what you want, you know." (34:2, separated)

(In general what sort of things do you like about working?)
 "For me, like to be independent really." (So you don't have to rely on your husband?) "No, no I don't like to - - - - - I want a new dress now I can go out and buy myself a new dress and no questions asked about it 'Where you get that?' and all that jazz. I earn me own money and buy what I want." (39 4, married)

Since, as shown in the section on Perception of Gender Roles (Chapter 10), only one West Indian woman interviewed considered role reversal acceptable, and the majority accepted the man's role as that of breadwinner, the emphasis placed on the importance of financial independence may be the result of the women's husbands giving them insufficient housekeeping money. Of those married respondents questioned just under half (7/15) did not know how much their husband earned. One woman explained that she did not really want to know because "otherwise I'll want £50 a week. All I want is my shopping".(33).

All the claimants I interviewed expressed a desire to work rather than depend on social security despite never having been directly pressurized to obtain a job. This was partly the result of the inadequacy of the money received and the difficulties they had experienced in claiming extra allowances, but in addition many were extremely ashamed about claiming social security

...I'll tell you the main reason why ... I decide to go to work is the social security ... I've been on social security for 3 1/2 years ... and whenever Lorna wanted something and I wanted something they said to me I'm no entitled to it. I never get anything off them people. When I move in here they send me £24 to buy curtains, ironing board, iron, saucepan, pots

and pens and I've got to buy all them out of £24 ... I couldn't get nothing off social security Before I fix Dorne's room out, if you'd have come here in May you would have seen the state of her room, and they come and I say 'I want help to wallpaper and things for the bedroom' and they say to me 'Oh Miss Adams you've got wallpaper you cant have more' and you should have seen the wallpaper and he said it was alright, you know They wouldn't give me nothing at all and I said I'm really fed up and that's why I really, really make up me mind to get a job.' (17, single)

"I do get some money from social security but it's not the same as actually going out and working for my own money you know When you get your money from social security it's your own but it's still not the same as actually going out and getting, earning your own money For instance if I go somewhere and someone says to me, you know, ---- 'Are you working' ---- you sort of hesitate before you answer, you know, because the thought of telling them that you're on social security - well I don't know for other people but for myself - sometimes I feel ashamed of having social security ... If it's not absolutely necessary, you know, you wouldn't get me going through that place but it's sort of no choice I do miss you know sort of working properly ----- a lot just to say ... being independent I do feel guilty most of all when, you know, you hear on the television about all these scroungers ----- you know you feel really (laugh) - I don't know about other people - but, you know, I feel I cant wait to get a job.' (36:3 & 6, single)

"You wanna see how much I'm working for now but at least it's a job, it's better than being on social security because when we both on social security he'd go up and get our money this week, next week he goes up again 'Sorry you've got to take a Bl over to social security', for no reason at all. You know that got me worried, you know like what we going to eat, how are we going to pay the rent and stuff like that. I find you're better off working. If it's even for £32 a week you know you're better off working because they want to know where he was born, how many times we had intercourse, where intercourse took place. They really want to know your personal things You know I was ashamed being on social security because I don't really like going up there, you know, because there's quite a few of us going up there, you know, and I try to drift away from that like and I think that's what's ----- is up I think that's one drawback this country's got - if they didn't have social security here I think more of us would be better off. Getting a job and, well not better off, but a lot of us would be more independent. You know what I mean you have to depend on someone else." (16: 3 & 7, single)

"I feel so ashamed to go and cash my book. I get everso embarrassed, I don't know why. I feel everso embarrassed. If anybody asks me what work I'm doing I feel everso, you know ----- people might think you're lazy you know, and sometimes I read in the paper they talk about scroungers - I feel everso ashamed. I feel everso ashamed to cash my money, honestly I do." (12:3, single)

White Respondents

Of the sixteen white women interviewed seven worked outside the home part-time and nine were not engaged in wage labour at the time of the survey. Seven of the nine respondents who were not employed would like to work.

Escape from the boredom and isolation of domesticity

As with the West Indian mothers, the most common response to a question about reasons for working was that the women worked, or wanted to work, to relieve the isolation and tedium of domestic labour and child care

"... At least when you're at work you're meeting people, you know what I mean. You're not on your own like. You go to work and you've got somebody who's going to listen to you and you're going to listen to them because of being in the same ----- camp you know It's like just a bit of freedom just to be away from the house for about two, even if it's only two hours. You're on your own like, you're yourself like. Because you know a woman's hardly ever got a break, you know what I mean (Not working) I feel hopeless, you know. I just feel cut off, you know what I mean ... I feel useless and then I wish I had the money, do you know what I mean. You know I feel just so cut off from people an' all." (15: 3 & 6, not working)

(Why do you want to work?) "Well because I'm absolutely bored to death with staying home (Do you miss the money?) No. No actually the money isn't desperately important to me now. It's just that I need someone to talk to now ... (I feel) depressed. Well I think it's depressed but I've been told that it's not, it's one of them things. I feel lonely and depressed." (26:3, not working)

"... I do like to be working. In fact I get very depressed when I'm not. I get miserable and I get tearful when I'm not working cos I'm cut off from life which is what my husband doesn't seem to understand I like to be with people --- and to er ----- keep the old clock ticking. You know, keep

in circulation a lot more I feel very insecure when it comes to having contact with people again. I find that I become very nervous. I think ----- when I start a job it will take a good few months for me to settle down whereas it would take someone else five minutes ... (23 3/4 & 6, not working)

"I miss being out, you know. Sometimes in the house all day, being in the house all day she (daughter) starts to get on my nerves and you miss having company of your own age." (25 5, not working)

"...With being a mother I found ... you can't get away and relax. You've always got the thought of the children and it's always put down as your responsibility, unconsciously often, by other people, and it takes a very great effort to change that."

(So if you're going out to work you're getting away from the immediate responsibility of the children?)

"Yes, and you can follow your own interests and you tend to get treated more as an individual. I think particularly when you've got small kids you can have a break, you can start thinking for yourself. When I was just a mother I used to think of things I could do but I couldn't put them into practice. After a while I found that I was getting a bit stale. I also found that I couldn't talk, there wasn't the opportunity to hold adult conversation - I couldn't talk to people to think things out. It just seemed to reinforce sort of me being simple or something. You know if you're working you can talk to people on the same level (When not working) I became aware that I couldn't go anywhere by myself ----- and em I lost interest totally in what I looked like, my appearance and ---- then I felt a little bit, well very uncomfortable in whatever I did. I also probably got a bit depressed I think he (husband) resented me relying on him for social contact. That was something he's never been particularly keen on. He wants to come home and have a home life and relax. I wanted to get out, away from the house. You know for him it was a change to be home, quiet, to be by himself and not to have to talk to people; for me it was nice to be able to get out and talk." (45 2 & 4, working)

Absence of social life

This strong desire for companionship is hardly surprising when the women's isolated situation is considered. Of the nine mothers who were not engaged in wage labour at the time of the interviews six said they have no friends, very rarely go out, and only talk to the other mothers at the school. Among all the white respondents, both working and not working, ten went out in the evenings only

"rarely" or "occasionally" and, as with the West Indian women, this situation was contrasted with their husband's social life

(Does not see anyone during the day) "It's just of a night time --- I think about half past three when I go for the kids, then I start gabbling to the mothers, you know. I think that's the only time I really do have anything to say you know. It's terrible boring especially if you haven't got the money to jump on the bus and go and see somebody (Do you go out at all in the evenings?) "No" (Never) "No never" (Does your husband go out at all?) "Oh yeh every night ..." (Do you mind him going out without you?) "Oh I couldn't care, you know. You get to the stage when you get used to it. It's been like that for years, you know what I mean ----- You couldn't stop a man anyway in his leisure time, you know. You can't say 'You're not going out' you know." (How do you think he would react if you went out?) "Oh stars!" (Would he not look after the children?) "Would he hell. No. No ----- That's what I mean they've got too much - too much of their own way." (15 7)

(Do you see anyone during the day?) "Well there isn't anybody round here who I know. I talk to people round the school like but I don't go and visit. The only place I visit is me sister's. She lives just down Hockley like ... I go down there a couple of times in the week but you know there's nobody round here who I know..." ("Rarely" goes out in the evenings) (Would you like to go out more?) "I would do yeh, I wouldn't like to do it every week, I couldn't keep it up every week, like say about once or twice a month I wouldn't mind. I was going to go out with me husband and his family when it was his birthday in July (now October) but something come up so we couldn't make it. Since then he's said we'll make it another time but up till now he hasn't mentioned anything so I'm still waiting for that." (3 7/8)

Importance of the wife's wage

Although the desire for the companionship provided by the work environment was perceived as an important reason for working, or wanting to work, by the white women interviewed the wage was also a motivation. However, whereas the majority of West Indian respondents saw their wage as providing them with a degree of financial independence the majority of white respondents saw the woman's wage as important because one wage is not sufficient to support the family. When asked whether they felt it is important for a wife (or cohabitee) to have money that she

has earned herself, seven of the white respondents did not think it important because couples should share their money

"I don't mind because we pool our money anyway and pay out what's owing, you know, and share what's left as spending money, you know, so it doesn't really matter. When I'm at work the money I get it goes into the house, you know. It's not my money. We do the same with his money. It's not his money, it's ours We never sort of say 'Well this is how much I picked up, do you want to see my wage slip?' We never think of it like that you know. We always think that what we get is ours, not his or mine, you know. We never hide anything. It just came natural to us when we started living together, you know. We'd have to look after each other and that was it." (25:4/5 & 8)

A further five respondents thought it important for a wife to earn a wage because then she can contribute to the household economy, but here again the emphasis was on sharing. Two of the women interviewed thought it depended on the husband's attitude

"... It doesn't matter a dam who's money is earned. It doesn't matter if you earn it or if he earns it. It doesn't matter if you support him if the attitude's right If you're living with a man who supported you and there was the attitude that, you know, you're dependent on this person 'I'm doing you a bloody big favour by supporting you'. In actual fact you're doing him the favour I firmly believe in wages for wives you know. I don't think any man should sort of think he's doing you a bloody favour. It doesn't matter which way it goes - who supports who - there's just got to be the right attitude." (32:7)

"It just depends on what your situation is. It depends on whether your husband is one of those people who gives you quite a substantial amount just to spend as you please, or whether you've got to take it out of the housekeeping. I'm lucky in the sense that ever since we've been married my husband's always given me an amount just strictly for myself." (5:3)

Indeed neither of the two respondents who did want to work because of the money they themselves, rather than the family, would receive had any money left out of their housekeeping money after buying food and paying bills.

I would like to have money of me own to spend on different things like, even if it was only about £10 or £11 to spend. I'd think 'Oh at least I've got it to spend on meself or on the kids and things' ... It just all goes into the house." (So you're left with nothing?) "Except for me family allowance which I draw on Tuesday, you know My husband gives me like the wages and that but by the time I've paid everything out, paid out for the food and that well I haven't got none left to spend on anything ... I'd like to go out and spend money on clothes for them (the children) but I haven't got the money to spare because it's all gone in the housekeeping and I'm paying the bills and things, and the rent." (3 4 8 6)

(Does he give you money for the shopping?)

For the shopping, so I've no way got a pound to myself. (Talking about the man claiming social security)

"..... I don't think it's right at all. I think the payment should be given to the woman, you know, for the woman to have a bit of pocket money for being in the house doing the washing and looking after them. With the payment going to the man he has control over the money and decides whether or not to give the woman any. While the man is claiming for his woman, while he's out of work, he couldn't care whether the woman is at work or not. I mean I'm not just saying him in particular, it could be going on with thousands of men, given that attitude. Whereas if the money was handed to the woman herself instead of the man claiming it I mean you wouldn't find half the women going to work. If they had a bit of pocket money just for being at home they wouldn't be so bored. They'd be able to go out to their friends and have a social evening once a week, you know what I mean. A social evening at bingo or a woman's night once a week, or even go and have a drink which the woman can't do and that's why she has to go to work and maybe leave a family which she doesn't want to leave in the nursery. I mean the woman's just put down that she should be in the home - I suppose that's the attitude of some men, just stopping in the house. If they haven't got much money the man knows where she is If that was stopped (giving social security to the man) and it was given to the woman, even if it was only £7 a woman wouldn't have to go out to work, you know what I mean, to get money for the kids. Cos some of them only earn £6 out on a cleaning job two hours an evening, when she could get that instead of her husband claiming for her when she might rather be with the kids in the evening instead of having to slog herself for £6. Cos I was only getting £11 all day Saturday and Sunday and five evenings a week All they want of us ... is for the woman to be in the kitchen and in the house all day, you know. I mean nothing could stop them going out ---- to the pub, being down there all night and just coming in you know. But all that's stopping now because the woman can do the same with her bit of money (if she works). She can find somebody to mind the kids. She's got a bit of freedom and the husband doesn't like it: 'What's my wife doing now she's gotta bit of freedom, she's got somebody to mind the kids'. Cos a woman's got a man just the same way

as he thought he had the woman. He knew where the woman was but the woman didn't know where he was but now, you see, the woman's got a bit of freedom to go out to work. She's got friends or her mum or her dad to mind the kids while she can go to bingo or social and now he's thinking 'the randy devil where the hell is she?' while she's never known where he was! You see all that's changing and they don't like it now you see. Even a woman's taken over the man's job which they don't like! As I say it's about time, it should be equal.' (15/ 3 & 16/17)

Family Income

The two women quoted above were the only two white respondents who said they did not know how much their husband's income was

.... I wouldn't like to know how much he earnt because if I knew how much he earnt properly then I'd probably start wanting more money and I don't want to do that you see. The money what he gives me now is alright, I can just about get through on it but if I found out he was earning a lot more and only giving me so much then I wouldn't be satisfied, I'd have to have some more off him.' (3-5)

Thus, unlike the West Indian respondents, the vast majority (12/14) of the white women interviewed knew how much their husbands earned. Just over half of the white respondents (8/14) received a regular housekeeping allowance from their husband, one an irregular amount and five couples had joint bank accounts or some other method of pooling their income. The majority of white women, therefore, had at least a limited control over some of the family income even if this involved no more than deciding what food to buy. This contrasts with the situation of nearly half the Asian women interviewed who did not receive a regular amount of money from their husbands. Nevertheless only two of the white respondents, who were engaged in wage labour, said they would give up work if their husbands earned sufficient to support the family.

Reasons for not engaging in wage work

Nine of the white respondents were not working outside the home at the time of the interviews. The most common reason for this was that they believed their

child/ren needs them at home (5). Three respondents were looking for work, but one was finding it difficult to obtain a job which co-incided with school hours and one to find "the right sort of work". One respondent would not consider working because her husband would not agree.

Influence of husbands

In the main, however, rather than preventing their wives from working the white husbands imposed restraints on the type of work they did and were agreeable as long as it did not impinge on their wife's role as domestic labourer.

"I wouldn't mind getting a job nights but he (husband) won't let me do it. He said he wouldn't mind me doing it in the day time ... but he doesn't like the idea of my working nights ... It would be perfectly okay. The children would be okay but he just doesn't like the idea of me working nights ... As I say I'm a night person and I enjoy working nights ... I can go straight through the night, come home, do the housework, crash out about 10 o'clock and come about 4 o'clock I'm ready again I am me own gaffer ----- and he's not the sort of person who'd turn round and say 'No' but it's not worth pushing it because he would be grumpy all the time and I couldn't turn round and ask him to do anything to help me if it was an emergency - he'd just say 'Well why should I?' I told her not to do it in the first place. You'll have to give up the job' which if I start a job I want to start it and carry on." (32 2)

(If you decided to go back to work how do you think your husband would feel about it?)

"----- Well he wouldn't be displeased because it would be what I wanted. So long as it didn't interfere with the children and the housework." (22-3)

(What does your husband think about you wanting to go back to work?)

"He doesn't mind the idea of me going back to work but he is rather fussy about the type of work that I do ----- Cos he knows that I've just been bumming around, if I can use that word, for a few years and he doesn't want that for me anymore, which I suppose is a good way for him to think. At least he cares. At least he shows he cares." (23 5)

Asian Respondents

The majority (13) of the 22 Asian women interviewed had never been engaged in wage labour. Of the remaining nine Asian respondents seven were working at the time of the interview although only three of these women were working outside the home. None of the six Moslem women interviewed had ever engaged in economic activity, either at home or outside the home.

Importance of the woman's wage

When questioned as to why they work the most common response from the working Asian women was that they need the money

"I've done machining at home for about two months, since my in-laws went to India for a holiday. I started the work because we couldn't run the house without my father-in-law's wage. We couldn't afford to keep the house on my husband's pay so I had to get some work." (47 2, homemaker)

"We can survive with two incomes but not with one. Cant do it with the one." (53:2, working full-time)

Among the vast majority of Asian respondents the woman's wage was perceived as a necessary contribution to the household income rather than providing her with a degree of financial independence. Indeed only one of the Asian women interviewed expressed a desire for her own money - "I have to ask my husband (for money) now. It was better before (when she was working)" (50).

Household economy

Nearly half (10/22) of the Asian respondents had no regular source of income. In four households the husband buys the food etc. and only gives his wife her 'pocket money'. In three families the woman has to ask for money and in another three cases (extended families) earnings are pooled and controlled by the mother-in-law.

(Does your husband give you a regular amount of money for housekeeping?) "Oh no" (How does it work then?) "He used to give me all the money when we first got married, you know. After, all things change, you know what I mean He do everything. He do the shopping so I don't bother now. But if he give to me he will have it back, you know what I mean. He do the shopping if we need to buy clothes for the children." (What about food?) "He do everything." (So you don't have any money?) "No nothing except for the kids, you know, school meals." (65:2, not working)

(Husband speaking) "When she want it (money) I give it her. If I give her £50 to spend, she spend it on clothes and none left!" (27:2)

"My husband gives his money to his mother and she buys all the food." (And what about bills?) "They pay them because he gives them all his pay." (So you don't have any money?) "I keep my family allowance and that goes on their (children's) clothes." (Do you find it difficult to manage on the money he gets?) "Well sort of living with them it's okay. I don't know if we'd manage if we lived on our own." (47:1, homemaker)

"We pool our money as a family - including my father-in-law. If I worked my money would also go into the pool because it goes in the family." (11:3, not working)

Of the remaining respondents three are given a regular housekeeping allowance by their husbands, two save the husband's wage and spend the wife's, and in three families the husband gives his wife all his wages and then takes back what he needs

"Pakistani men they do give money to the wife, you know, but then when they need it they have it back like. Giving is only in name - they have it back." (80:1, not working)

Thus a large percentage of the Asian women interviewed did not have control over any money and yet only one respondent saw the opportunity of a degree of financial independence provided by a wage as a motive for working. This is related to responses received in answer to questions about sex roles (discussed in Chapter 10) where the majority of Asian respondents defined the man's role as that of breadwinner and the woman's as domestic labourer.

If relieved of the financial necessity of work

Of the seven Asian women working at the time of the interview four said they would not work if their husband earned sufficient to support the family. However, of these four, three of the women worked at home and although they would give up their current work they would nevertheless like to work outside the home:

I do really like working outside, you know
At home you're just by yourself and you're stuck.
Outside you meet more people. You enjoy yourself
more. You go out and you get fresh air and you meet
so many people, you know, and you enjoy it.
(171, homemaker)

(When working outside the home) I enjoyed the company
of the other people and the work I was doing I liked
.... I think I miss the company and going out the house.
You see quite a bit when you get out the house. It's better
than staying home.' (47:2, homemaker)

'I think I'd rather be out because I get fed up at home and I
don't like the machine work anymore. This 'flu, I can't
get it away. The doctor he told me that if I stop the work the
'flu probably go.' (41:3, homemaker)

Escape from boredom and isolation

Similarly, the three respondents who said they would continue to work even if it was not a financial necessity all perceived work as providing a relief from boredom:

(Why do you work at home - is it just for the money or do you like the work?)
'I don't bother too much about the money but I just like to do it.
If I don't have any work I just feel tired. It's better to do your
work. (Do you think you would still work if your husband
earned lots of money?) 'If I have money still I have to work you
know. I can't eat money. I have to look after my body as well.
I can't just sit down and do nothing just because I have money.'
(44:1/2, homemaker)

'... You've got nothing to do sitting home. I'd rather work.
I'd rather have something to do - different things at a time. I
mean it keeps you going. It don't get boring How many

days can you do housework ... I mean you get bored. Two hours and you can scrub everything. What would you do with the rest of the day. I think I'd rather ... go to work, have your eight hours there." (29:1 & 4, working full-time)

Of the fifteen Asian women who were not working at the time of the interview only two said they did not want to work because they were happy at home, five dismissed the question because they could not work even if they wanted to and eight wanted to work. The following quotes summarize the responses received from the eight women who wanted to work

(Why would you like to work?) "It's really both the money and getting out of the house. I mean getting out of the house is more freedom. I mean more sort of meeting people and more happiness, you know, rather than being lonely at home. And then on the other hand you're gaining something, you're gaining money. You can have a better life, have luxuries. It's both. It's better to work." (20:3, not working)

"... all I know is that I want to work - just go out and do something, anything so long as you're out of the house. You get bored, homesick, doing the same job all the time." (11b:1, not working)

Many of the Asian women interviewed experienced isolation - "There's more freedom in Pakistan. In Pakistan it's all open and all relatives together. My life is more like a prison here 36) - which was contrasted with the social life of their husband. Twelve of the respondents said that their husbands went out most evenings to the pub or that they did not know where they went:

"I only go out for shopping. Otherwise it's very hard for me cos there's no-one to look after the children." (Does your husband go out much?) He's always out. (Is it usual for men to go out a lot more than women?) "Well the woman is stuck with the child inside, you know. We can't go out as much as a man. A man has a free life. He doesn't have kids with him so it doesn't bother him. He thinks he's a businessman and he's trying to feed the family." (11:4)

(Do you go out at all?) "Well it depends if I want to buy something or see somebody but otherwise no." (Does your husband go out in the evenings?) "Well he's always out ----- Looking for a job or something." (Does he ever go to the pub?) "Yeh he goes to the pub quite a bit. He drinks. He goes everyday." (Do you mind that?) "No so long as he's okay. It depends how he acts you see." (It is alright if he is not drunk) (11b:5)

(She never goes out. Her husband ...) "go to pub without me. I don't want to go to pub. Indian woman doesn't drink. His job is thirsty, he says, so he has to have it. That what he say, I don't know." (17:5)

"I never go out I used to go shopping with my mum. I really miss that now." (What about your husband?) "Oh yes he does go sometimes but not me. He goes to the pub at least once a week. I don't really know where he goes sometimes, he say he going to see his friend, you don't know I'm not really happy, you know what I mean. I don't know what's going on outside (laughs)" (Husband speaking) "I'm not staying at home!" (65:3)

Thus, as with the West Indian and white respondents, the Asian women interviewed worked, or were attracted to work, because it offers companionship and a relief from the boredom and isolation of domesticity. However, only seven out of 22 Asian respondents were working although an additional eight would like to work. The question remains therefore as to why such a small percentage of Asian respondents were working.

Reasons for not engaging in wage work - cultural and family constraints

As mentioned earlier, five (four Moslem) respondents simply did not consider the possibility of working and their explanations were in terms of cultural and family constraints:

(Would you like to work?) "No Pakistani women don't work. Our husbands don't let us. We don't work My husband - it's his job to get the money." (56:1, Moslem)

(Would you like to work?) "No Pakistani women don't work. Our husbands don't let us. We don't work My husband - it's his job to get the money." (56:1, Moslem)

(Why have you never worked?) "Pakistani women don't work. We don't do it. We just look after the house. What is the man for? My husband would not let me work." (Husband speaking)
 "Work is the man. She has got quite a lot of job at home - to clean the house, look after the children, wash the clothes."
 (27:1, Moslem)

(Would you like to work?) "My husband don't like."
 (32:1, Church of England)

"We don't do it. Pakistani women don't work ..." (Why is it Pakistani women don't work?) "They just don't. Our relatives would not like me to work. Our relatives and my husband."
 (36:1, Moslem)

(Would you like to work?) "My husband don't like sending me to the factory" (Even where it's all women?) "No. He never let me go to factory even if it's all women." (35:1, Moslem)

Indeed many of the women were prevented working, or restricted in their choice of work, by family constraints. Even before marriage, work outside the home is not an option for many Asian girls because of the possibility that it will restrict their marriage options:

(Did your parents mind you not working?) "They didn't want me to work" (Why was that?) "Well I don't know. I suppose they think ... that if you send a child to work that might spoil them, something like that. Some girls walk out of their home without telling their parents or anything ... They just go out with any boy, that's what they do. We could go out and have freedom but on the other hand we might spoil our complete future."
 (You might not get married?) "Yeh" (11:2)

"Well it's only these days that Indians start working ... Nowadays every school leaver she goes straight to work. In my time, when I left school only a very few worked. Mostly the Sikhs did, the Hindus they didn't want their daughters to go out. Mother and father say it's their responsibility for the girls. It's the parents' responsibility to bring the girl up and all the things she need."
 (So they wouldn't have liked you to work?)
 "Well I did wanted to, you know, but my brothers didn't like it. They feel ashamed or something. Later on, gradually girls start going to work and now it's different these days. Now for the brothers and for the parents they don't feel shame for their girls to go to work. Because with the marriage arrangement it's the parents who have to provide everything and they worry that people start talking that their daughter have to work for her own wedding. These days it's all going modern. Modern is more better I think."
 (20:2)

As shown earlier, work is not a possibility for some married Asian women because their husbands do not approve. Eight of the 22 respondents said that their husband would not let them engage in any form of wage labour. Three of the husbands allowed their wives to work at home but not outside the home:

"My husband doesn't like me to do work, you know ... Sometime I never finish my work and I just lie down on the setee and my husband says 'It's a good idea if you do some work but I won't let you go outside to work and you have to look after your family as well.'" (44:2)

Similarly two of the respondents thought their husbands would let them work outside the home if it was an all-female environment. Six husbands did not restrict their wives in their choice of work and three would allow them to work except that the children are too young:

(Do your husbands want you to work, or do they not want you to work?) "Oh no they don't mind. They don't mind. It depends on how we feel. They don't stop us whether we want or whether we don't as long as we are happy." (11:2)

"When I started working he say 'you've got your first child, you shouldn't leave him with somebody, it's not good'." (50:1)

Having to care for young children was also a major reason why the respondents did not work outside the home. Indeed thirteen of the Asian women interviewed stated that they could not work outside the home because of the children and two would not consider doing homework until their children were older. This corresponds with the earlier finding that 19 of the 21 mothers questioned felt that the mother is the best person to look after the child. The two Asian mothers who worked outside the home at the time of the interviews had commenced work because their mother or mother-in-law became available to care for the children during the day.

Reasons for Working/Not Working

Respondents of all races explained their motives for working in terms of both the money wage labour provides and also to relieve the boredom, isolation and pressures of domesticity:

"I do it for the money but I do enjoy working as well cos I think you need a break really when you've got so many children. To get out and meet people and things like that, even if it's only to talk about nonsense it's somebody to talk to. It gets a bit boring sitting here looking at the four walls." (38-2, West Indian, working part-time)

The need for friendship and company, provided by working, may be made more necessary by the fact that the women interviewed rarely socialized in the evenings because of various constraints which did not apply to their husbands who were free to go out when they desired.

Thus the vast majority of employed West Indian and white women would continue in their work even if the financial imperative was removed and six of the seven working Asian women would like to work outside the home even if it was not financially necessary.

Although the woman's wage was important to all three groups of respondents its implications differed between the groups. For the majority of West Indian women interviewed the wage was not simply perceived as an essential factor in the household economy but rather as important because it provides the woman with a degree of financial independence and allows her to buy things without asking her husband's permission. By contrast only one Asian mother expressed a desire for her own money and the majority of white respondents emphasised the importance of sharing between husband and wife. This difference in emphasis between the white

and West Indian respondents is possibly linked to another discrepancy - whereas the vast majority (12/14) of the white women knew how much their husbands earned this only applied to half the West Indian respondents. Amongst the Asian women nearly 50 per cent had no control over the family income and this is compatible with the belief, amongst the Asian respondents, that men are more competent than women in matters outside the home (see previous Chapter).

Certainly the influence of husband upon the woman's employment options varied significantly. Thus while the West Indian women largely disregarded their husbands' opinions (although six of the respondents' husbands did not want their wives to work five of the women continued working and the remaining one would work if she had someone to look after the children), white husbands had some influence on the decision of respondents and amongst Asian women husbands frequently prevented them working or influenced the type of work environment they could consider. Moreover the fact that the Asian respondents were prepared to accept these constraints reflects the subordinate position of women within Asian culture (see Chapter 6).

2. EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS OF RESPONDENTS

In addition to being restricted in their choice of employment by the demands of child care and attitude of their husbands, the respondents' work possibilities are obviously affected by their qualifications and work skills. For this reason their schooling, qualification, skills and attitude to education was covered in the interview.

West Indian Respondents

Education of respondents

The majority of the West Indian women interviewed had left school at an early age and were without qualifications. Thus, 25 of the mothers completed their full-time education aged 16 or below, and 26 had no recognized school or occupational qualifications although five of these women considered themselves to be skilled dressmakers. Of the remainder, four respondents left school at 17, one attended college for shorthand and typing and one for a pre-nursing course. Two of the women interviewed had C.S.F.'s, two were qualified S.P.N.'s and one an S.R.N. The majority of respondents (17) had completed all their schooling in the West Indies, while 13 experienced both West Indian and British schools.

Attitude to education

Many of the black respondents regretted not having achieved any academic success and in answer to the open-ended question 'If you had the last ten years over again would you do anything differently?' eleven of the women spontaneously said they would have a "better" education.

"First of all I would try to learn some more, you know. I pass something to be somebody you know." (30-13)

"I'd do a bit better with my education before I start having kids. I wish I trained before." (33-20)

Similarly, in response to the question 'When your daughter is grown up what would you like to see her doing?' 15 of those women with daughters said they want them to have a "better" education and /or job than the respondent had experienced. In two cases the respondents perceived a direct relationship between a career and independence.

"I would like them to get a trade - that's what I want the kids to do, get a trade ... If they have a trade and a man come they can say 'piss off'. They have their trade to live on." (8:15)

"I want to see her very happy. I want to see her very happy and enjoy life. Have a career when she grows up so she can do something of herself, not depend on me or depend on a man, you know, to look after, support her and things like that." (10:11)

Although the last question referred directly to daughters, as opposed to sons, the respondents were also asked whether they felt education is as important for a girl as a boy. None of the West Indian women interviewed considered it more important for a boy, and two felt education is more essential for a girl as they do not want their daughters employed in menial work

"It's more important for a girl." (Why's that?) "Well that girl will be no maid in anyone's back yard." (4:16)

"No I think it's more important for a girl really. With a boy he can go and sweep the streets but with a girl, would you like to see your daughter sweeping the streets or being a traffic warden? Oh I think those sort of jobs are for men really, aren't they?" (33:19)

Certainly the West Indian women interviewed placed a high value on education and many felt it necessary to explain why they had not continued in full-time education to obtain qualifications. The most common explanation offered was that the family could not afford to let their daughter continue at school:

"I wish I'd gone further but my parents were poor, you know. They couldn't afford it really." (27:1)

Lack of finance particularly stunted schooling in the West Indies where full-time education ended at 15 unless the student excelled or unless fees were paid:

"Well in Jamaica really it's different from here. You reach a certain standard ... and then that's it really if your parents cannot afford to send you on somewhere else." (14:1)

"In my country most children usually leave their school, elementary school, at 15 unless you got the brains, or like unless you've got someone to help you like get in to high school. It's different to here cos back home you've got to have ... good brains or it's to have somebody like to pay for you to get you into a high school." (28:2)

Four respondents left school, or attended sporadically, because of domestic responsibilities:

"... I was out of school a lot because you know I was the biggest one and when my sister was ill ... I was the one that was stopped from school. Mother was working and daddy was at work. I had to stop off school so I had it pretty rough ... If I was told to do something ----- and I didn't do it, or not that I didn't do it but that I started it and I didn't finish it because I realised it was time for me to go to school When my mum came home and it wasn't done she'd say 'Well you're not going in this afternoon, you have to stay home and finish it' or maybe 'Do some washing or ironing' or something like that ... I just didn't have the opportunity to go to school I did want to stay on at school for that reason that I hadn't had much schooling." (36:4)

"When I was in Jamaica I didn't have much of a schooling ... because seeing as me mum wasn't out there I was stopping at me Auntie and she was no good you know. Some day I go to school, some day I didn't cos I sit at home and mind her kids you know. I didn't have much time really cos when I came over here me mum was pregnant. I came over here in September and she had a baby in October and I had to stop off school to look after the baby so it was really a hard struggle for me." (3:3)

"I left (school) before time because my grandmother she was ill. I had to take care of her with another lady, you know. It sort of impede my school days. I didn't go back to school." (18:1)

"----- I had to help (in the house) you see cos my dad is blind." (4:2)

However, despite the above quotes, the majority of respondents felt that their family had encouraged them with their education and only two of the West Indian women interviewed were pressurized by their mothers to leave school for other than financial reasons, or domestic responsibilities:

"I think it's because of her (mother) really that I'm sort of limited because she wasn't really interested in what I did at school. She wanted me to leave school and that was it, go to work. She wasn't really bothered." (38:3)

... She (mother) didn't let me stay on and then when I left (school) and I was to go to this place (course for computer operators) she wouldn't sign. She said to me that she's not signing it, you know, that I should go to work instead of being idle ----- that wasn't the word she used but what she meant was it. It wasn't a job, it simply wasn't work. And then I went to night school --- to do some typing which I did get, a diploma, and of course she was a bit shocked because when I was going to school she used to swear I wasn't going to school ... (that) I was going off somewhere to meet a fellow." (36-4)

Slightly more common (3 cases) was the situation where the respondent's mother encouraged her with her education but because of friction with her stepfather it was more convenient for the respondent to leave school

(When you left school at 15 were your parents happy or did they want you to stay on?) "Well my mum didn't mind really but, you know, my dad - my mum didn't marry my dad so it was a bit of an uphill struggle - my step-dad (I suppose that's what he is) he didn't really like me, you know, so the only thing my mum could do is to let me leave school at 15 and go out and support meself, you know, for peace I suppose." (1-2)

"She (mother) wanted me to stay on at school and do nursing. My stepfather didn't want that at all, he wanted me to go to work (laughs)." (39-4)

"Well my mother would like me to stay on but my stepfather we didn't get on so I didn't stop on ... The way of life that they live I wasn't used to it so I didn't stop with them. I left and took a room of my own when I was 16." (45-2)

Finally, the other explanations offered as to why the women did not continue in full-time education, or gain qualifications, were that the teachers were not interested, the respondent became pregnant and that migration took place at an inconvenient time

"I think if parents want their children to come (to Britain) they shouldn't take them when they're 14 cos I was gonna start to take C.A.C. at Jamaica and then mummy come and take me away from there when I was 14. I mean if she'd have waited until I was 15 or 16 it would have been better. It mess up your education. And I mean when you come over, when you come over here what I was doing when I was 12 I'm doing when I'm 15 again and you're going back, you don't go forward." (9-7)

To summarise, therefore, the majority of the West Indian respondents were unqualified and thus likely to be accepted only for jobs which did not require qualifications. However, this does not imply that the women did not value education since many regretted not having continued their schooling and wanted their daughters to have a "better" education and "better" jobs than they had experienced.

White Respondents

Education of respondents

Like the West Indian respondents, the majority of the white women interviewed (13/16) had left school aged 16 or below. Two continued their schooling until 17 and one respondent attended Teacher Training College. However, unlike the West Indian women nearly half (7/16) of the white respondents had a recognized qualification - two had O'levels, two C.S.E.'s, one a teaching certificate, one shorthand and typing and one hairdressing.

Attitude to education

Of the nine respondents who were unqualified three mentioned that they were satisfied with their education because

"I wanted to work in a factory." (22:1)

"... a woman's going to get married - it's different for boys - with girls they get married and all those qualifications are gone until later." (21:2)

(You didn't think it was important to get exams) "No ... I've seen quite a few friends who I used to go to school with and they seem just the same as I am - they don't seem any better for having these qualifications like, you know." (3:1)

Indeed of all the white women interviewed only one said she would improve her education if she could have the last ten years over again, and only six respondents said they wanted their daughters to have a "better" education than they themselves had experienced. Generally, unlike the West Indian respondents, the white women

interviewed did not feel it necessary to explain why they had not continued their schooling. Of the five who did offer explanations two were in terms of their parents discouraging them from staying at school, one of the women was pregnant while at school, the mother of one respondent could not afford to let her continue, and one said that in Ireland "you just have to leave".

Also in contrast with the West Indian responses were the replies given by the white women in answer to the question 'Do you think education is as important for a girl as a boy?'. Eleven of the white respondents considered education equally important for both sexes but the remaining five respondents felt it is more important for a boy

"I think it's more important for a boy ---- I believe it's more important for a boy because they have to work the rest of their lives where a girl doesn't." (35-16)

"I think it's more important for the boy because they're going to have a family." (21-2)

Thus, although a higher proportion of the white respondents, compared with the West Indian respondents, had formal qualifications they did not appear to value education of women as highly as the West Indian women had done.

Asian Respondents

Formal education

Only one of the Asian women interviewed had a formal qualification (B.A. India) and, indeed, only seven of the respondents were able to participate in the interview without an interpreter. In an additional four cases the women spoke a little English. Six of the seven women who had not needed an interpreter had received schooling in Britain ranging from two to eleven years. The only other respondent who had attended school in Britain spoke a little English. Eight of the respondents had attended school in India or Pakistan for a period ranging from

three to twelve years. Seven (4 Moslem) of the Asian women interviewed had never received any formal education. When asked why they had not attended school three of the women simply replied "I just didn't" (35), "my parents, they don't bother" (36), "my parents never sent me" (11). Other explanations were that the school was too far, that the respondent was constantly moving and that:

"We used to send the boys to school but not the girls, that's why I didn't go to school. Now the girls, until they are 12 or 13, they can go to school. When the girls are 12 we will go back to Pakistan. Maybe everybody going or maybe just me and the girls but we not going to send the girls to big school." (56-4, Moslem)

Similarly two respondents who wished to continue with their education were unable to because it conflicted with their role as domestic labourers

"My mother-in-law died and I had to look after the house. I wanted to continue with my education but my in-laws were only concerned that someone looked after the house. My mother-in-law died and the people they get on at my parents. They say silly things like they needed me here. You know they don't bother about me education because of the house. They say they don't mind even if I not educated. They wanted somebody to look after the house so I had to get married. Some in-laws they want their daughter-in-law to be educated but mine didn't. I left school when I was 16 and then I had the summer holiday and then I got married. I was 14 when I got engaged and my mother-in-law died after two months so they had to wait until I finish school." (Then you had to take over the running of the house") "It's terrible at that age, when you know you're a child and then you have all the worries. I would have been a different person. Like an educated person and a non-educated it's so different." (20-1)

"(My parents) told me that when you get married you only have to do kitchen work so I just left school." (11-4)

Attitude to education

Despite the above situations, however, 17 of the respondents questioned considered education as important for a girl as a boy, and 12 of the women wanted their daughters to be more educated than themselves. One of these women wanted

her daughter to be educated to increase her marriage potential but another wanted it in order that her daughter could have a degree of independence.

"I always tell my children that education is the best thing. My brother's son he's a doctor and he married a doctor. If the daughter is educated then you can find a husband who is educated. If she is not educated then you can't find an educated husband. It's important." (23:5)

(Do you think education is as important for a girl as a boy?)
 "Both the same but the girl she could stand on her feet. If she don't want to get married and she educated she could have a good job and be free." (71:3)

Thus although many of the Asian respondents had received only limited schooling, because of their gender, a majority considered education as important for a girl as a boy. Only one respondent intended leaving Britain to prevent her adolescent daughter having to attend school. The one qualified respondent had never worked and there was not a significant relationship between ability to speak English and wage work. Of the seven respondents who spoke fluent English only four had ever engaged in paid labour.

Education and Qualifications of Respondents

Few of the respondents had successfully pursued a specific career and the majority were restricted to jobs which demanded no more than a basic education. Most of the West Indian and white women interviewed had attended school until the age of 15 or 16, while education amongst the Asian mothers was more haphazard with seven never having received any formal education. Only seven of the Asian women spoke English sufficiently fluently to participate in the interview without an interpreter, but no significant relationship was found to exist between ability to speak English and participation in wage work.

In view of the rigid sexual division of labour which exists within Asian society, and which was reflected in the opinions expressed by my respondents in response to questions about the roles of men and women, it is perhaps surprising that the

majority of Asian women interviewed considered education as important for a girl as a boy and many wanted their daughters to be more educated than themselves. Similarly, the West Indian respondents placed a high value on education for girls as well as boys and indeed two felt it more important for girls. Less emphasis was placed on the value of education amongst the white women who were interviewed and five thought that education is more important for boys, than girls, because of their future role as breadwinner.

3.

EMPLOYMENT PATTERNWest Indian RespondentsEmployment prior to migration

As was shown in the previous section, the majority of West Indian respondents did not have formal qualifications and, furthermore, most of the migrants had no work experience. Of the 17 black women in my survey, who were living in the West Indies at an age when they could have been working, only six had worked outside the home. Three of these women worked as dressmakers and indeed a much larger number of the respondents had trained as seamstresses but were not regularly employed as such. Dressmaking is not a lucrative trade in the West Indies since it is considered a necessary skill for women and therefore there is little demand for the services of others. Of the three professional dressmakers one continued in the trade for three years, another "didn't like it so I leave and start to work at a laundry" and then after six months was employed by a family to care for their children, and finally one respondent changed to hairdressing after three years. Child care, shop work and domestic labour were the jobs performed by the remaining three employed respondents and two of these women worked with relatives or friends.

"We lived in the country and I had an aunty living in Kingston She had a shop ... and she had a little girl ..., the first child she had you see, and she couldn't get no-one to look after this little girl so she asked my father, which is her brother, if I could come and help with the little girl so I was with her for quite a long time." (When her niece was five the respondent...) "got a job as a nursery nurse, you know to look after two little boys while the mother goes off to work." (This was also in Kingston and the respondent continued to live with her aunt) (27:2)

"I've only worked once at home, in a shop. Afterwards I got married. I worked there six or seven months, got married and then came to this country (The shop was owned by a friend of the respondent's parents) Not a hard job, you know, just assistant in a shop, you know, serving and things like that." (19:1)

(When you left school did you get a job straight away?)

"Yeh we worked but not with qualifications. Say we worked with the whites out there. Domestic work, cooking, cleaning and look after baby and such thing." (Did you like that?) "Oh yes it was nice home." (Did you do that when you were 15?) "We work and go to school like how they work over here - get job with paper and go to school - well we done it out there like that as well. Go to school in the morning, go there in the evenings and in the mornings ... I did it until I met him (laughs) and then I started to have the kids very early." (8:1)

When the eleven respondents who had not worked in the West Indies were asked why they had not engaged in wage labour the most common response was that while you are single your parents provide for you and later your husband takes on the role of breadwinner:

(Did you want to work in Jamaica?) "No our parents wouldn't let us anyway. (Why was that?) "Well we didn't have no need to really. I didn't have no need cos I was living with them you see." (And they rather you didn't work?) "Well I didn't have to, you know. It's not like England. I'm with them and they used to give me everything, you know, so I didn't have to." (30:1)

"When we were young, girls were in the house unless they had like real good education like and they could get a proper job like. Most of them, as we were called the poor people never bothered like. Parents look after you, you know." (21:1)

"If you're married you don't usually go to work. Your husband goes to work and women generally stay at home and take care of the family and ----- housewife sort of thing, you know (although) I think they're doing it more now. It's like in this country everyone's going to work now. It's harder you see so one money just can't do everything." (191)

As described in Chapter 5, it is only amongst the middle and upper classes that economic circumstances permit husbands to adopt the role of breadwinner. There is no social barrier to lower class Jamaican women engaging in wage labour and many West Indian women are without the financial support of a husband. The views expressed above by my respondents reflect, therefore, a fairly middle class situation.

Employment at the time of the interviews

Of the eleven women not working in the West Indies eight were working at the time of the interviews, and five of the six who were employed prior to migration were working in this country. The mothers' own explanations for this increased economic activity most commonly included referring to the increased cost of living in this country because of having to purchase food, which could have been produced, and the expense of heating and warm clothing. Also important was isolation and boredom, but no doubt the most important reason is the increased availability of regular employment and this was the conclusion of Foner (*Jamaica Farewell*, R.K.P., 1979).

The desire for financial independence among West Indian women was discussed earlier (section on Reasons for Working) and although ten of the respondents said that at times they had found it difficult to secure employment in Britain all but two (two sisters aged 17 and 21) of the women interviewed had worked outside the home. Moreover, the emphasis was almost exclusively on full-time, rather than part-time, employment. (Only eight respondents had ever worked part-time). The employment history of Mrs. Grant, a Jamaican mother of four whose husband works at a West Bromwich foundry, is fairly typical:

Aged 20, and without qualifications, Mrs. Grant entered Britain in 1962 as a dependant of her husband. Shortly after her arrival Mrs. Grant gave birth to her son and did not work outside the home until he was six months old. The respondent then obtained a full-time assembly job in Halesowen and her son was cared for by Mrs. Grant's sister-in-law. However, Mrs. Grant only remained in the job for about four months because "it was too far from Handsworth". Also, by this time, the respondent's sister-in-law had secured a job and consequently Mrs. Grant's son went to a child minder. Mrs. Grant obtained her second job enamelling cufflinks and tie pins at a local factory but she left after five months because the work was straining her eyes. She then worked as a power press operator but left after six months because of pregnancy. Mrs. Grant's fourth job was at Cadburys packing chocolates where she remained

"for nine months and then ---- it was too far and you gotta work too hard. It was doing piece work and I didn't like the belts, the conveyor belts. It keeps you busy going that way - sometime I feel I going that way and then I feel I going that way (opposite direction) ... It was too hard and the distance was getting me down cos I left home in the mornings ... 5 a.m. or something like that, you know, it was too early and I had to go such a distance. Coming back home at nights I didn't get home until 6 o'clock or quarter past 6 because the number 11 bus is run so badly ... So I packed it in there and I went to All Saints (hospital) and I'm there since '74."

Mrs. Grant works from 7.15 p.m. until 7.45 a.m. seven nights a fortnight as a nursing assistant at the psychiatric hospital. She earns £160 a month but believes she "should get more money because that job is a dangerous job, it's a psychiatric hospital You're coming up against life and death sometimes ----- working with the older folks it's not too bad --- but when a big strong man or woman comes in it's really hard." Nevertheless Mrs. Grant says the job is "something that I love to do, you know. Sort of something that I really love. I care

for them you know. I don't mind, you know, like combing their hair, washing them and things like that."

As can be seen from Table II:1, the type of work performed by Mrs. Grant is fairly typical of the West Indian sample as a whole. The black women interviewed were concentrated in unskilled and semi-skilled repetitive factory work traditionally performed by women. Only one respondent, the setter operator, held a skilled factory position and this woman together with the core maker were the only respondents performing work traditionally associated with men. The average rate of pay of the employed respondents was £1.10 an hour.

Mrs. Grant's employment at a psychiatric hospital reflects the over-representation of black women in the National Health Service. Seventeen per cent of all jobs held by the West Indian respondents were with the N.H.S. while the corresponding figure for the white interviewees was 7 per cent. Moreover, figures for the country as a whole show that immigrant women are concentrated in the least desirable and less prestigious areas of the N.H.S. (see Chapter 7).

Limitations on employment options

As to why the respondents are concentrated in low level jobs several factors appear relevant. Obviously the women were restricted in their choice of work by their lack of qualifications and one respondent felt this was the most important limitation

(Do you think it is difficult to find work)

"Yes it is, especially if you haven't got O'levels, C.S.E.'s, those sort of qualifications. And when you're writing letters well it's like begging if you get what I mean, begging for the job especially when you haven't got qualifications."

(Have you ever felt you didn't get a job because you're a woman?)

"No not really. Sometime I think there probably be something wrong. I don't think of me colour ... Well sometime colour got something to do with it but not all the time It's back to the same old thing - qualifications." (16 3/4)

TABLE II:1

All jobs held by West Indian
mothers since migration

All jobs held by white mothers

FACTORY WORK

FACTORY WORK

Machine Operator	13
Assembler	12
Packer	9
Press Operator	7
Unspecified	5
Driller	2
Spot Welder	1
Setter Operator	1 50

Press Operator	6
Machine Operator	4
Packer	4
Unspecified	4
Assembler	2
Viewer	1
Cutter	1
Polisher	1 23

Jewellery trade 9

Jewellery trade 1

Sewing trade 9

Sewing trade 1

Foundry (core maker) 1

69

25

SERVICES AND DISTRIBUTION

SERVICES AND DISTRIBUTION

Cleaning	11
Shop work	5
Bar/Catering	4
Children patrol/ playgroup	2
Bingo Operative	1 23

Shop work	9
Cleaning	6
Bar/Catering	3
Playgroup	2
Hairdressing	1
Bingo Operative	1 22

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

Auxiliary	9
Domestic/cook	6
Nursing	4
Operating theatre attendant	2 21

Auxiliary	4
Domestic	1
	5

OFFICE 6

OFFICE 16

119

TEACHING 1

69

Seven women, however, felt that they had been rejected for jobs simply because they are black

(Do you think you've ever been turned down because of your colour?)
 "Sometimes because sometimes you see they advertise - you'll read in the paper - and when you go they say somebody already take it." (12:2)

"... I phoned up for an interview and I went up and when I went they told me the job was gone and when I came out there was about three other people sitting outside, and I realised, for the same job that I was after they were also after ... They could have said to me that I wasn't qualified for the job, I mean I would have taken that ... You sort of get used to it ... It's like, you know, if you work in a place and you can't stand the smell, after a while you get used to it, you know." (36:6)

"Why I don't get jobs is because of me colour. Several times I've rung up for a job, been told to come in for an interview and then as soon as they see me they say the job's gone." (40:2)

By contrast, none of the respondents felt that they had been refused a job because of their sex and the most common response to the question was "I've never applied for a job that a man would do". This confirms the result of the local employment survey (see Chapter 9) where it was found that applicants for jobs, as well as employers, are aware that some jobs are 'women's work' and are prepared to accept rigid sexual divisions.

The majority of respondents were of the opinion that having children, rather than their sex, race or lack of qualifications, was the most important restriction on their choice of work. In answer to the question 'Do you think that having the children has limited you in your choice of work?' twenty-two respondents felt it had. Children were seen as a restriction in two ways. Firstly, the women had found that the majority of employers question female applicants about their family responsibilities and appear reluctant to employ a mother of small children

"I don't know why I can't get a job, whether it's the kids or what ... I think it's the kids really cos ---- you know, a lot of people they think in terms of the children be sick and you having to lose time from work, you know. I mean they ask you ... things like 'how will you manage with the kids? Who's going to have them in holidays and what if you have to work late?' and things like that, you know. I mean probably if I had somebody else who lived here and say 'Well somebody would be home so they'd be alright you see' but you can't say 'Oh they can stay at their granny's' - you don't know for sure she will be there So I suppose that's the problem really. So I've decided that I shall tell them I've only got one next time (laughs)." (20-3)

"The children make it more difficult. When I applied, when I was looking for a job, I applied 15 times ... This one I have was the 16th, you see, and I told them how many kids I have (4) and they said 'How will you cope?' So I come home and says 'Oh I haven't got the job' When you tell them the amount of children you've got they think 'Well too many children, that one won't be able to cope'. (Have you ever gone for a job where they don't ask you how many children you have?) "No. They ask if you're married and how many kids. I know somebody and she's got five kids. To get a job she told them - she couldn't tell them she had five - so she tell them she'd got two and she got the job. If she's said five she wouldn't get it. I know that. The kids - that's the only thing that hold you back." (39-6)

Secondly, the women themselves are limited to jobs with hours which are compatible with the hours of their child care provision

"Everybody complains it's difficult to get a job but I could get a job but it's a matter of whether you have someone to look after the children. Like I mean I could work in a nursery but um ---- you gotta get someone to look after them from half past three I considered an evening job, I think it was 5 o'clock till the time they go to bed So you know I do get really fed up of staying at home but I mean ----- some things you have a choice but some things you just have no control over. (36-2)

"I've been over Dudley Road (hospital), it's the kids or the hours cos I went over there and the jobs they have are half seven in the morning It's no good to me with these two you see ----- They never offered me the 1 till 5 p.m. I think maybe if they offered me 1 till 5 I might try and get a child minder to fetch them from school and keep them till I come home. Cos they finish school at 3.30 p.m." (20-2)

(Do you like your job at the hospital?)

"It's not like say it convenient because of the hours and the children are small. You see I could go in for studies but that mean that the children have to be on their own and I wont sacrifice that. You see I wont leave them on their own, I would rather wait and then I can do day course in the college and finish at 5. They come half past three, he (husband) will be in." (45)

"... if I didn't have her (daughter) now I could do a full-time job, or even a morning job like from 9 till 3. But you know it's strictly evenings for me now until she get school age." (21)

Termination of employment

Similarly the third most common reason (9/71) given by the respondents for leaving a job was that child care arrangements had become unsatisfactory:

"I went back to work when my eldest girl was a couple of months old but I was only there a couple of weeks ----- because I was having trouble getting someone to look after her so ----- Well I didn't want to leave ---- but I did leave because it was a matter of, you know, finding someone to look after her or leave her on her own. After a year the respondent obtained another job) And I stayed there for about a year or just over and then I left because I was having problem with the nursery again They were in private nursery and the lady that was looking after them was giving it up. So of course I had to give up my job again and stay home." (36-2)

(Working as a nurse) "I was working nights and I didn't have anybody to look after the children. Me mum was looking after them in the day, you know, when I was sleeping but at nights she couldn't cope and I couldn't get them into a nursery so I had to give it up." (42-2)

With the exception of three respondents who had remained at their jobs for over six years the average length of employment, without a break, at the same firm was 21 months. The most common reason for leaving a job was pregnancy (23/78) but the second most frequent reason (11/71) was that the respondent was made redundant or that the factory closed. As mentioned, nine jobs were resigned because of child care problems and the same number because the respondent disliked the actual work. Other reasons for leaving jobs were because of boredom (7),

travel problems (4), the offer of more money (4), for health reasons (4), for a better job or course at college (3), because the respondent moved or because of problems with work mates (2).

Choosing work

When selecting jobs the most common considerations were the hours and travelling involved and the respondents appreciated jobs that were clean and easy but offered variety. The importance of a friendly atmosphere was constantly mentioned and several (3) of the respondents who were employed by the National Health Service identified their work as socially important, and more than just a job, because it involved the young, the sick and the old

"You know they're nice people (in hospitals) and I enjoy working with people more than in a factory. In a factory it's more labour, you're not doing anything more than producing for someone, but in a hospital you're doing a good job for someone." (19:2)

White Respondents

Type of employment

All the sixteen white respondents had at some stage engaged in wage work although since having children the emphasis was on part-time, rather than full-time, employment and all the seven women employed at the time of the interview worked part-time. Like the West Indian, the white respondents were concentrated in traditionally female occupations (Table 11:1) and the average hourly rate of pay of the white women interviewed was almost the same as that of the black respondents (£1.07 p.h.). Over one-third of the white women were engaged in unskilled or semi-skilled factory work which is often repetitive although the respondents themselves sometimes found the work interesting. For example, the following account describes the work of a hand press operator at two different factories:

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(When you left school did you get a job straight away?)

"Yeh I went to work at me mother's place because she used to be at work then and she got me a job there on the hand press. It was only about £6 a week, that's all, that was even in '69 ... It was where they make all the oil lights and that like. It was just putting stuff in, like where the wick goes, a thing for the wick to go in and then putting that in the press and then just putting like a top thing on top and moving it around. I got bored after a bit like, you know ... It was like practically everyone there was like elderly, more middle-aged people ... there wasn't many youngens and after a bit I got a bit fed up with the job because it seemed the same thing all the time you know ... I only stopped there for I think two years and then I left to work at a bigger place down Spring Hill, Bullpits. I went to work there for a few years, like till I met me husband." (And did you like that?) "Yeh it was hand press again. It was an interesting job like, you know. You had to put the teapots on and make the holes for the spout to go on. You had to like mark the bottom of it with the brand of the teapot on the bottom ... It ranged from the small teapots to the great big perculators like, you know, which with the perculators you had to work on six different presses ... You had to make the holes for the handle, then you had to go onto another press and do the spout ----- then onto another one on the other side. Altogether it worked out working on about six different presses cos I had them altogether on the one bench like, you know. You had to take the box, great big boxes (there's a dozen in a box) you had to take them on a trolley from one press to another like going right the way round. It was ever so interesting I liked it better there, you know, because there was more arrangement of work and I didn't get bored there and there was more people like being a bigger firm you see. It was better." (3:2)

Unlike the West Indian respondents, over half the jobs held by the white women interviewed were in the service, distribution and office sectors. Thus although both the white and black respondents were concentrated in traditionally female occupations, which are by definition low skilled and low paid, the white women were over-represented in shop and office work while the West Indian women were over-represented in the National Health Service.

Termination of employment

The average number of jobs held by each of the white respondents was four and they left jobs on average after 1 months. Again, the most frequent reason for leaving a firm was pregnancy (16/46) but the second most common reason was that

the women obtained a higher paid job (-). Other reasons included the respondent being made redundant or sacked (4), child care arrangements becoming unsatisfactory (4), the woman moving (3), getting married (2), becoming bored with the job (1) and disliking work mates (1).

Limitations on employment options

Obtaining jobs, however, was found to be relatively easy by the white respondents and only two had experienced difficulty. Like the West Indian respondents, a high proportion of the white women interviewed felt that having children limited their choice of work. One respondent felt you have to lie about your responsibility for the children, one had actually experienced blatant discrimination because of her role as mother, and one woman pointed out that it is not only difficult to find a suitable job but also to make child care arrangements so it is possible to attend the interview:

----- Well you're okay if you know how to lie ... You'd say you didn't really live with the children, your mother had fostered them for you and they were staying with their gran. You just lied about it and said the children were being taken care of by somebody else. When employers asked what happened when they were ill you said it didn't affect you unless they were seriously ill. You just lied great big lies and you just kept your fingers crossed that the children weren't ill ... And if the children were ill I've got a very good doctor and he'd give the certificate for me." (32:8/9)

Shortly after that I got fed up and I said I wanted to look for another job and I found a shop wanting a trainee manager. Well I got the job which involved going away for two weeks which I could have done because my mum and dad are pretty good and my husband can, you know he's pretty good with her (daughter). I could have done that but they said 'No you can't do it but you can have the job and we'll see how you get on and in a couple of years' time when the baby's a bit older maybe you can go on the course then'. But I didn't like the people there." (25:3)

"... to arrange for the interview meant I had to find some way of caring for the children so I just had to rely on people helping me out and if I hadn't got that help I couldn't have gone for some of the jobs." (45:6)

Like the West Indian women the white respondents were most concerned about the hours involved when they considered possible jobs and a number felt limited in their choice of work because they are restricted to part-time employment because of the children. Moreover one woman felt having the children prevented her using her teaching qualification:

"... With the children I could only consider ----- doing cleaning jobs where it didn't really count. I applied for a teaching job and one of the first questions I was asked was 'Do you have children, or do you plan to have children?' and when I said I had some I knew I'd lost." (45)

However, whereas none of the West Indian respondents were aware of experiencing purely sexual discrimination three of the white women thought they had been rejected for jobs simply because they are female:

(After marriage) "I tried for jobs but they weren't really interested. Women's lib wasn't very well organized and they didn't take on women that were newly married ... I went for several interviews ... and each time I got turned down. They didn't give reasons but I guess it was that ... the fact that you were a woman goes against you. But you can't honestly blame the firm. I mean if they're going to train somebody in their particular way they don't want them leaving just when they've got them properly trained." (5:3 & 5)

(Have you ever felt that you didn't get a job because you are a woman?) "Well I did feel it once when I was teaching. I didn't get promotion ... I had been in the job for a while and my husband was on a course and this young chap joined just after me, but he hadn't been qualified as long, and I was told that they weren't putting forward my name for the job (promotion) because he was a man with a family to support whereas in fact I was supporting my husband at college." (45:3)

The typical employment pattern of the white respondents was therefore that they had obtained a factory, shop or office job relatively easily on leaving school. They had left jobs, on average, after eighteen months, and although the majority felt that having children limited their choice of employment, only two of the white women had ever experienced difficulty in obtaining a job. After childbirth the emphasis among the white respondents was on part-time, rather than full-time work.

Asian Respondents

Of the twenty-two Asian respondents only nine (six Sikh and 3 Hindu) had ever engaged in economic activity. Five of these respondents had only worked outside the home while four had performed wage work both in factories and at home. The nine women had held a total of eighteen jobs (four homework) and they had stayed on average of three years at each job. Eight of the factory jobs held were machining, three were assembly, one polishing and one sorting bottles. Of the reasons given for leaving particular jobs pregnancy was the most common (4), but marriage was also a frequent reason (3). Other reasons why the women left employment were that the factory closed (1), the job was too heavy (1) and that the family went to India.

Factory work

Three of the respondents were engaged in factory work at the time of the interviews. One is a machine operator. The respondent started working at the factory two months after leaving school. She wanted a copy typist job but was not successful in obtaining this "so I thought whatever comes I'll take it so when I got this job I got used to it so I've stuck with it". The respondent has worked at the factory about three years and her rate of pay varies because:

"It's piece rate. If my machine breaks down my money's gone down. If my machine carries on running then I'm alright. Sometime I pick up £3, maybe £36, if I lucky maybe I get £46 (net pay) so it all depends. But I mean if the machine break you only pick up £32 or £33." (29:3)

The second respondent works as a machinist in a large all-female Asian factory. She started working two years ago when her mother came to Britain "and she said she'd look after the children". The respondent works from 8.30 a.m. until 4.30 p.m. and earns £30 p.w. net.

Finally, Mrs. Singh is employed in a medium sized, mixed race factory, sorting bottles. The respondent started working because her mother-in-law became available to look after the children and her sister-in-law, who works at the same factory, told Mrs. Singh there was a vacancy. She earns £33 p.w. net and works from 8.30 a.m. until 4.30 p.m.

Homework

Four respondents were employed as home workers at the time of the interviews. Mrs. Singh sews trousers at home. She is paid 20p a pair and it takes her half an hour to make a pair if she is not interrupted. The work arrives spasmodically. The respondent bought her own sewing machine and does not receive any holiday or sick pay. She was anxious to know "what are you going to do (with the information). You're not going to pass this over" (17). Mrs. Singh would prefer to work in a factory:

"because at home you're by yourself and you're stuck. Outside you meet more people. You enjoy yourself more. You go out and you get fresh air and you meet so many people, you know, and you enjoy it. At home you can't work with the children because when they start crying and that you stop, you know, and you get sort of confused. When you're at home you've got your housework to do as well as your work. You've got to work hard by yourself doing overtime." (17:2)

Like Mrs. Singh the second respondent who works at home had to buy her own machine and does not receive holiday or sick pay. She sews kagools and is paid 20p for small sizes and 25p for large sizes. The respondent worries about her two children hurting themselves on the sewing machine. She obtained the work via someone she knew who was already working for the firm but would rather work outside because of the company and getting out of the house.

Similarly, Mrs. Gurbax Singh obtained her homework through her mother:

"she used to work for the factory, you know. I asked my mother and she said if you want to learn from me she bought machine along and she teach me. (The firm is London based). I do some every

day. He give me about 65 dresses in a day, then I have to finish in the day ... I do it easy in the morning when he (son) play, then in the afternoon he usually sleep and I do my hard work. Then I usually stop about half past three when I get my daughter and get them tea, and dinner for my husband." (Are you rushed sometimes - do you have to do the dresses for when he says?) "Yeh" (And are there times when he doesn't want any dresses?) "Yeh sometimes he only want about 100 dresses on Monday for the Friday and I make them slowly then." (44:2)

Mrs. Singh is paid 26p or 30p for each blouse, and 69p per dress. It takes her about 15 minutes to make a blouse.

Finally, Mrs. Gurden Singh obtained her homework through a neighbour:

"I buy a secondhand machine. Now I've got a new 'Brother' - it cost about £250. Well I don't mind because I can earn about ... sometimes £30, sometimes £40 and sometimes £50. I make skirts, dresses and blouses. She gave me ?? skirts and I make them in four hours. That's about £6 for four hours work ... Some skirts you get 20p, some skirts you get 25p, some 30p. Some dresses you get 50p, some 55p. It all depends how much work you have to do on it." (Do you prefer working at home or would you rather work in a factory?) "No I think I'd rather be out because I get fed up at home and I don't like the machine work any more. This flu I can't get it away. The doctor told me that if I stop the work the flu probably go (Had 'flu' two months) ... The trouble with working at home you have to get up so many times to open the door. When you are in the factory nobody come to the door." (Cannot work outside because of son). "I'm not thinking of going to work until he is three." (44:3)

Employment Pattern

The employment situations of the white and West Indian women interviewed were similar in that they were concentrated in traditionally female occupations and received very similar rates of pay. Also, both groups of women identified having children, rather than their sex or race, as the most significant restraint on their choice of employment, and pregnancy was the most common reason for both West Indian and white women leaving work.

Despite these similarities, however, differences are also evident and aspects of the employment patterns of my sample reflect the national situation described

day. He give me about 65 dresses in a day, then I have to finish in the day ... I do it easy in the morning when he (son) play, then in the afternoon he usually sleep and I do my hard work. Then I usually stop about half past three when I get my daughter and get them tea, and dinner for my husband." (Are you rushed sometimes - do you have to do the dresses for when he says?) "Yeh (And are there times when he doesn't want any dresses?) "Yeh sometimes he only want about 100 dresses on Monday for the Friday and I make them slowly then." (44:2)

Mrs. Singh is paid 28p or 30p for each blouse, and 69p per dress. It takes her about 15 minutes to make a blouse.

Finally, Mrs. Gurden Singh obtained her homework through a neighbour:

"I buy a secondhand machine. Now I've got a new Brother - it cost about £250. Well I don't mind because I can earn about ... sometimes £30, sometimes £40 and sometimes £50. I make skirts, dresses and blouses. She gave me 22 skirts and I make them in four hours. That's about £6 for four hours work ... Some skirts you get 20p, some skirts you get 25p, some 30p. Some dresses you get 50p, some 55p. It all depends how much work you have to do on it." (Do you prefer working at home or would you rather work in a factory?) "No I think I'd rather be out because I get fed up at home and I don't like the machine work any more. This flu I can't get it away. The doctor told me that if I stop the work the flu probably go (Had flu two months) ... The trouble with working at home you have to get up so many times to open the door. When you are in the factory nobody come to the door. (Cannot work outside because of son). "I'm not thinking of going to work until he is three." (41:3)

Employment Pattern

The employment situations of the white and West Indian women interviewed were similar in that they were concentrated in traditionally female occupations and received very similar rates of pay. This reflects the operation of rigid gender divisions within the British labour market, described in Chapter 2, and the fact that women generally receive lower rates of pay than men. Also, both groups of women identified having children, rather than their sex or race, as the most significant restraint on their choice of employment and this highlights the relationship between women's role as reproducers of labour in the home and their position as waged workers in production. Pregnancy was the most common reason for both

West Indian and white women leaving work.

Despite these similarities, however, differences are also evident and aspects of the employment patterns of my sample reflect the national situation described in Chapter 7. Thus, since having children, my employed white respondents were engaged almost exclusively in part-time waged work while the emphasis among the West Indian sample was on full-time employment. The Asian respondents worked either at home or full-time. Also, my sample reflects national differences in the type of work performed since while the white respondents were concentrated in shop and office work, the West Indians were over-represented in the National Health Service and a large proportion of the employed Asian women interviewed were engaged in homework.

Personal experience of sexual discrimination was recognised by only three white respondents but in the main the women only applied for typically 'women's' work. The Sex Discrimination Act (see Chapter 3) had not had any visible impact on their employment options. On average the white respondents stayed at their jobs for a shorter period than the West Indian and Asian women, and whereas the offer of higher wages was a common reason for the white women changing jobs this only occurred on four occasions amongst the West Indian respondents and no Asian woman had changed jobs because of the offer of higher pay. Possibly this discrepancy reflects the greater ease with which white women can obtain work. Seven of the West Indian women justifiably felt that they had been rejected for jobs simply because they are black. Thus, although the black women interviewed, like the white women, identified their child care responsibilities as the most significant constraint on their employment opportunities, they experienced the additional restraint of racial discrimination.

CHAPTER 12

THE SHARED AND SPECIFIC OPPRESSION OF WHITE, WEST INDIAN AND ASIAN WOMEN IN BRITAIN

In the previous chapters I have provided a comparative analysis of the employment position of white, West Indian and Asian women in Britain and argued that, in order to understand their position as waged workers in production, the role of women in the family must also be considered, along with state and employer policies which influence the roles of women both in the home and in the labour market. The research has examined, therefore, the relationship between four major areas of study which previously have largely been considered in isolation from each other. The four boundaries which have been crossed are: women's paid employment, the role of women in the family, ethnicity, and state and employers' policies and attitudes. A consideration of the relationship between these areas highlights the complexity of the situation.

An examination of the position of white, West Indian and Asian women within the British labour market reveals both similarities and differences in their situation and a major thrust of my research was to consider what determines both the shared and diverse characteristics of their employment position. The significance of the following factors was considered:

1. Their position as women in terms of the constraints experienced by women because of gender divisions within the labour market and, more specifically, the restrictions on the employment options of mothers of young children because of inadequate child care facilities.

2. Cultural differences, particularly in the interpretation of gender roles and the ideology of parentcraft and child care.

3. Racial discrimination.

I Summary of Information Presented

Previous approaches to waged work amongst women, reviewed in Chapter 1, do not sufficiently consider the relationship between the structure of the labour market and the role of women within the family. Moreover, all the approaches examined treat women as a homogeneous group and fail to consider differences between them. The intended contribution of my research is to provide substantive evidence of the relationship between the role of women in the family and their role in production, and to highlight variations in the employment and family situation of women of different ethnic origins.

Women's employment position in Britain during the 1970s was examined in Chapter 2 and this analysis illustrated rigid gender divisions within the British labour market. Although women form an integral part of the labour force they remain concentrated in a limited range of occupations and industries and in the main the jobs that women do are distinct from those of men. Women are over-represented in less skilled, lower status, and more poorly paid jobs than men and much of the waged work of women is similar to the jobs they perform in the home e.g. catering, cleaning, nursing. The industries in which women work are characterised by small groups of workers, widely scattered workplaces, a large proportion of part-time employees, high labour turnover and little effective trade-union organisation. Thus the waged work of women, irrespective of ethnic origin, exhibits similar characteristics and in the context of a sexually divided labour market a worker's gender is more significant than ethnic origin.

The evidence which is available indicates, moreover, that mothers are concentrated in even lower skilled and lower paid jobs than women generally. This evidence is however extremely limited and my empirical research provides substantive data on both the practical and emotional constraints on employment amongst mothers, and demonstrates variations between women from different cultural backgrounds.

One of the major restrictions on the employment options of mothers is inadequate child care facilities in that many mothers are prevented from engaging in waged work while others are limited to jobs which coincide with available child care provision. State and employers' policies and attitudes towards working mothers, examined in Chapter 3, demonstrated that, with certain exceptions, the child care needs of employed mothers have been largely ignored by successive governments since the Second World War, while employers rarely provide facilities to enable mothers to combine the roles of producer and reproducer except to overcome a severe shortage of female labour. The predominant assumption is that a woman's primary role is in the home: employment among mothers of pre-school children contravenes the ideology of the family and motherhood which has dominated welfare policy in Post-War Britain, while women's role as domestic labourers can be used to the benefit of employers in that many women are forced to work either part-time or as homeworkers and these women provide a flexible, cheap and constant supply of labour.

Although waged working mothers of different ethnic backgrounds share the consequences of a gender divided labour market and inadequate child care facilities, there are also differences in the employment position of West Indian, Asian and white women in Britain. Part Two of this thesis considered the significance of their diverse cultural and historical backgrounds. In this section a review of family

structure, child care and women's employment in Britain, the West Indies, India and Pakistan suggested that assumptions in Britain about the role of women and the ideology of motherhood are both historically and culturally specific. During the Second World War married women in Britain were encouraged to enter production, and nursery provision was increased. While lower class West Indian women have traditionally been forced to support themselves and their children financially, the religious and cultural background of Asian women defines their role as limited strictly to the home and there is no place in Asian society for an unattached woman. Different cultural definitions of gender roles, it was argued in Chapter 7, must be considered in any attempt to understand the different rates of economic activity amongst white, West Indian and Asian women in Britain. The effect of racial discrimination was also examined in this Chapter but it was noted that differences in the employment position of men and women in Britain are greater than disparities between women of different ethnic origins.

My empirical research was concerned with how women themselves experience their conflicting roles within the family and the labour market. Women's own perception of gender roles and parenthood, reasons for and experience of paid labour and child care, and the extent to which objective reasons for their subordinate position within the labour market are viewed as constraints by the women themselves were all investigated. The evidence, based on research conducted in the Handsworth area of Birmingham during 1978 and 1979, indicates the importance of understanding both the similarities and differences in the employment position of women of different ethnic origins, highlighting especially the complex relationship

between women's paid employment, their role within the family, ethnic variations, and state and employers' policies.

Employment

Economic Activity Rates

A significantly higher proportion of the West Indian women I interviewed worked outside the home, compared with the Asian and white respondents, and this is consistent with earlier findings (Gregory, 1969; Hood, 1970; Pollack, 1972; Smith, 1977). Also, the greater emphasis on full-time, as opposed to part-time, employment amongst my West Indian and Asian sample reaffirms earlier studies (Lomas, 1975; Smith 1977). Differences in economic activity rates did not correspond with variations in the family incomes of the three ethnic groups and whilst previous research (Gregory, 1969; Lomas Social Development Centre, 1975; Thomas Coram Research Unit data reported in Fonda and Moss, 1976) has sought to explain the high rates of economic activity exhibited by West Indian women in terms of financial necessity, my data indicate that the explanation is more complex and that cultural and other factors are also influential in determining whether or not a woman engages in waged work. Indeed, even if it is accepted that women do simply work for the money provided by employment this in itself can have various implications, and certainly the three groups of women I interviewed perceived a woman's wage in very different ways.

Perception of a Woman's Wage

Amongst my West Indian respondents a woman's wage was highly valued for the financial independence it bestows on the woman. The majority of these mothers felt strongly that it is important for a wife or cohabitee to

earn her own money in order to buy what she wants without having to ask permission or depend on the whims of a male provider. Amongst the West Indian families with whom I had contact, the earnings of the husband and wife remained distinct rather than being pooled into a joint household account. The majority of working West Indian respondents had not informed their husbands how much they earn, and just under half of the married West Indian women questioned did not know their husband's earnings. This approach to money is consistent with the situation which exists in the West Indies where historically black men have rarely earned sufficient to financially support a wife and children. West Indian women are therefore often in the position of having to provide financially for both themselves and their children and black women have been forced to adopt a more independent role than their white counterparts.

By contrast with the importance attached to financial independence and the maintenance of separate finances among the West Indian women interviewed, my white respondents emphasized the desirability of husbands and wives sharing their incomes. A woman's wage was valued, by the white mothers, for its contribution to the household economy and the vast majority of these women knew how much their husband earned and received a regular housekeeping allowance or shared a bank account with their husband. The majority of white respondents, therefore, had at least limited control over the family income and did not highly value the financial independence provided by their wage.

Only one Asian woman interviewed perceived the opportunity of a degree of financial independence bestowed by a wage as a motive for engaging

in paid labour although a large percentage of the Asian respondents did not have control over any money. This situation is consistent with the rigid sexual division of labour within Asian society. The religious and cultural background of Asian women defines their role as strictly within the home while the role of a husband is perceived as that of breadwinner. Economic activity outside of the home for Asian women therefore contradicts cultural definitions of gender roles and although many women in rural Pakistan and India do participate in the farming economy their contribution to family income is seldom acknowledged. Similarly the low wages of Asian men in Britain have forced some Asian women to engage in waged work but frequently this is performed within the home or in an all-female environment. The significantly different rates of economic activity between Moslem and non-Moslem women clearly demonstrates that women's employment cannot be understood purely in terms of economic factors.

Factors in addition to the wage which influence women's decision to engage in waged labour

In contrast with previous research, which has argued that women's economic activity can be explained in purely financial terms, my findings indicate that the situation is more complex. The majority of the women I interviewed, irrespective of ethnic group, said they would continue to work even if it was not financially necessary because paid labour provides a relief from the boredom and isolation of domesticity.

Conflict is frequently experienced by mothers who want to engage in paid work but feel that they should be full-time mothers (Ginaberg, 1976), and ambivalent feelings about employment amongst mothers were evident

among my respondents. For example, although the majority of employed respondents said they would continue working even if it was not financially essential, in response to another question, disapproval was expressed, by the same women, towards employed mothers who are not compelled to work for the wage. Since according to dominant ideology in Britain at present, a mother's primary role is within the home, mothers may feel it is more acceptable to explain their waged work in terms of the benefits it confers on the family rather than in terms of the satisfaction that they themselves experience through employment. Consequently, surveys which ask mothers blunt questions about why they work may get a less than accurate picture of the mother's feelings.

Type of Work Performed

There were both similarities and differences in the employment situation of my West Indian, Asian and white sample and my findings substantiate and expand the limited evidence which is available.

The type of work performed by my West Indian and white respondents was similar in that they were concentrated in traditionally low paid female occupations. This similarity has been previously noted by both Smith (1977) and Mayhew and Rosewell (1978) who concluded that the difference in job levels between men and women is more striking than any difference between women of different ethnic origins. Thus, in the context of a sexually divided labour market a worker's gender is more important than ethnic origin.

Despite these similarities, however, differences are also evident and while my white respondents were over-represented in shop and office work the

West Indian women were over-represented in the National Health Service. This situation is again consistent with earlier research (Mayhew and Rosewell, 1978; Rex and Tomlinson, 1979). Unlike the West Indian and white women interviewed, homework was common amongst the Asian respondents and this reflects cultural constraints on the employment of Asian women outside of the home.

Constraints on Choice of Employment

The three groups of women I interviewed, in common with women in previous surveys, were concentrated in low paid and low skilled employment and this reflects the rigid gender divisions which exist within the British labour market. This division was recognised by both applicants for jobs and employers included in my survey of employment opportunities in Handsworth who, despite Sex Discrimination legislation, were aware which advertisements were applicable to women. Similarly, when my respondents were asked whether they had ever been rejected for a job because of their gender the most frequent response was "I've never applied for a job that a man would do" and only three women (all white) felt that they had experienced sexual discrimination. Thus, gender divisions were not only recognised but also remained unchallenged and this finding is supported by the small number of cases nationally taken to industrial tribunals under the Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay legislation (see Chapter 3).

Although the evidence (Smith, 1977) demonstrates that black women experience a substantial level of racial discrimination only seven of my black respondents (all West Indian) felt that they had been rejected for a job because they were black. This discrepancy is possibly partly explained by the ability of employers to mask discrimination when it occurs. Certainly

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the Personnel Managers I interviewed in Handsworth were very aware of the illegality of racial discrimination and consequently were hesitant in their comments about black workers. No such reserve was evident when these employers discussed the role of women workers and they seemed uninhibited about making blatantly sexist remarks.

Rather than sexual or racial discrimination, however, the majority of my respondents identified having children as the most important restriction on their choice of employment. Children were seen as a restriction in two major ways. Firstly, the women's experience had shown that the majority of employers question female applicants about their family responsibilities and appeared reluctant to employ a mother of small children. Many of my respondents felt that they had been rejected for jobs simply because they have children. Secondly, children were perceived by my respondents as a restriction because mothers are limited to jobs with hours which are compatible with the hours of their child care provision, or prevented from working because no provision is available.

Although the women I interviewed perceived children as the major restriction on their employment options my research demonstrates that waged work amongst women is influenced by a complex relationship between several other factors. While gender divisions within the labour market are the most significant determinant of the type of work performed by women of all ethnic origins, in terms of skill level and pay, racial discrimination and state and employers' policies towards working mothers act as a further constraint. In addition to these features, however, cultural variations in the interpretation of gender roles and the ideology of parenthood have a significant impact on the percentage of women who engage in waged labour.

Cultural Variations in the Interpretation of Gender Roles

Compared with the West Indian and white women interviewed, my Asian respondents were unambivalent about their role as women and tended to respond with shorter and more definite answers to questions about their perception of gender roles. The vast majority of my Asian respondents were of the opinion that men are 'naturally' more capable outside the home, whereas women excel in the domestic sphere. Thus a 'good' husband was identified by the Asian mothers as one who fulfils the role of economic provider and the Asian respondents did not expect their husbands to participate in domestic labour. Similarly, when asked to identify the characteristics of a 'good' wife the Asian responses were remarkably uniform and only three characteristics were mentioned: a wife's responsibility to look after the house and family, obey her husband and obey her in-laws. My Asian respondents viewed their marriage as inevitable and, since they believed that they should obey their husband and in-laws, the opinion of their relatives had a significant influence on the lives of the women. Thus many of the Asian women were prevented from working, or restricted in their choice of employment, by family constraints.

The majority of my Asian respondents appeared to accept rigid gender role divisions and did not express a desire for independence on their own behalf. However, seventeen of the Asian women questioned considered education as important for a girl as a boy, twelve wanted their daughters to be more educated than themselves, and the majority of these mothers valued education because of the independence it would bestow on their daughters.

In contrast with my Asian respondents nearly three-quarters of the West Indian women, and half of the white mothers interviewed, expressed

the opinion that neither sex has a 'natural' or 'instinctual' ability for particular tasks. On the subject of the respective roles of husbands and wives the responses of the white and West Indian women were more diverse than those of the Asian respondents and a degree of ambivalence was evident. Although the majority of the white and West Indian respondents recognized that the role of a 'good' wife is generally defined as taking full responsibility for the home they questioned the equity of this situation and felt that men should share housework. This is in contrast with the Asian respondents who appeared to accept without challenge their role as domestic labourer. Similarly although the vast majority of the West Indian women, in common with the white respondents, objected to the notion of role reversal, a sizeable minority justified their objection in economic terms: they felt that work is more important for the man because men generally earn more than women. Unlike the situation which exists among Asian women, the decision to work among my West Indian sample was largely uninfluenced by the opinions of others and, rather than preventing their wives from working, white husbands imposed restraints on the type of work performed and were agreeable so long as it did not impinge on the wife's role as domestic labourer.

The difference in attitudes between the West Indian and Asian women is related to their different cultural and religious backgrounds. Thus while Asian culture stresses the importance of the family and the authority of men, West Indian women have historically been forced to adopt a more independent role because West Indian men have been denied fulfilling the role of provider. Although Asian and West Indian women share a

that particular is, child care which was significantly more than that of the Asian men.

similar British colonial legacy in their homelands one important respect in which this differs is that, unlike the situation in the Caribbean, the structures which uphold the characteristic family form in the Indian sub-continent escaped virtually unscathed.

Ideology of Parenthood and Child Care

Available evidence on the role of women as mothers is extremely limited and while studies have shown that women with young children occupy an inferior labour market position, compared with childless women, there is little data on how women perceive the role of motherhood. A woman's perception of the role of a 'good' mother and that of an ideal childhood is likely to influence her attitude to child care, and in turn her feelings about paid work. Similarly the degree to which a father participates in child care possibly influences a woman's decision to enter paid employment since it affects her responsibilities within the home.

Existing literature on West Indian children under five tends to be critical of West Indian mothering from a white middle class standpoint (Moody and Stroud, 1967; Pollack, 1972). My data did not, however, demonstrate significant differences in mother/child interaction between my three groups of working class mothers and when respondents were asked to identify the characteristics of a 'good' mother the emphasis, irrespective of ethnic group, was on discipline and physical care. Similarly although Lewis (1975) and Young (1970) have argued that West Indian fathers participate in child care and interact with babies and young children more than white fathers my evidence did not substantiate this view. Both the West Indian and white fathers with whom I had contact 'helped' with, rather than participated in, child care although their participation was significantly more than that of the Asian men.

A higher proportion of West Indian, compared with white, mothers work outside the home and as a consequence attention in the literature has been devoted to assessing the quality of care provided for the children of black working mothers during the day (Moody and Stroud, 1967; National Elfrida Rathbone Society, 1976; Jackson, 1979). Previous research has shown that childminders and relatives are by far the most common source of child care provision used by employed West Indian mothers (Moody and Stroud, 1967; Gregory, 1969; C.R.C., 1975). This situation is not however replicated in my survey. Ten of the West Indian children with whom I had contact spent their days with childminders, six stayed with their father while their mother worked and 15 attended local authority nurseries. This high use of nursery provision, compared with other surveys, possibly indicates that, although not adequate, nursery provision in Handsworth is higher than average. This possibility is substantiated by my finding that a higher proportion, than the national average, of white children in my survey attended day nurseries. Amongst Asian children with whom I had contact nursery schools were the most common form of provision and, contrary to other surveys, no Asian or West Indian children were cared for by the extended family.

My research is however consistent with the view that, because of the tradition of informal adoptions and shared childcare in the West Indies, West Indian mothers are less reluctant than white women to leave their children in the care of others while they work (Fitzherbert, 1978). Over half of my West Indian respondents spent a large part of their childhood with other than their biological mother and while 19 of the 21 Asian women

questioned, and 14 of the 16 white respondents, thought that the biological mother is always the best person to care for a pre-school child only half of the West Indian mothers interviewed were of this opinion.

Existing evidence shows that Asian culture defines the role of women as devoted to their husband and children and my findings support this view. All the Asian mothers I interviewed believed that a mother should devote her life to her children. By contrast only two white and four West Indian respondents were of this opinion. My research also points to the strong value placed on education amongst Asian mothers, and nursery schools were principally appreciated for their educational role rather than as child care provision.

As Ginsberg (1976) has noted, white mothers frequently experience a conflict between their feeling that they should stay at home full-time with their pre-school children and their desire to work outside the home. The ideology of motherhood in Britain stresses the unique importance of the first five years of a child's life in terms of the child's subsequent development and only two white respondents dismissed this suggestion. By contrast only a small minority of the West Indian and Asian women interviewed placed particular significance on the pre-school years.

The diversity of opinion expressed on the subject of child-rearing reflects the different cultural backgrounds of the women. The belief among the white respondents that the first five years of a child's life are crucial is related to the ideology of maternal deprivation which has been, and continues to be, used to justify inadequate child care provision in Britain, and whereas it is believed within Asian and white society that pre-school children should be cared for by their biological mother, child

care in the West Indies tends to be shared. As my research demonstrates, these different cultural attitudes towards motherhood and child care influence the proportion of employed mothers within different ethnic groups.

Despite these differences, however, mothers of all ethnic origins share certain common experiences. All mothers who want to work suffer the consequences of inadequate child care provision and discrimination by employers, and my respondents, particularly the white women, vividly described both the physical and emotional pressures they experience as working mothers.

II Limitations of Research

While my research demonstrates the complex inter-relationship between women's employment, the role of women within the family, ethnicity and state and employers' policies it must be recognised that the research describes the situation which existed at a specific point in time, in one small area of Birmingham, amongst a limited number of women. The representativeness of both the area and my sample must therefore be briefly considered before examining the implications of my research for social policy and future prospects.

Handsworth is an area characterised by a high proportion of New Commonwealth immigrants, poor housing, a high economic activity rate amongst women, and families living on a low income (see Chapter 8). Inhabitants of Handsworth are affected by employment opportunities in Birmingham and the West Midlands generally and this area has experienced a higher rate of unemployment than the national average (see Chapter 9).

Handsworth, therefore, can be described as an area of multiple deprivation and as a "typical decaying inner-city area, with all its attendant problems" (John, 1972).

In the area of child care provision Handsworth is influenced by the overall policies of Birmingham Social Services Committee and, at the time of the interviews, this Committee was involved in a campaign to eliminate 'abuse' of day nursery provision, was even more rigorous than other local authorities in its enforcement of the notion that day nurseries are a privilege, to be reserved for children who are defined as 'deprived' in some way, and was attempting to increase part-time provision at the expense of full-time places. The means-tested maximum fee charged by Birmingham Local Authority day nurseries was, moreover, substantially higher than charges in other parts of the country. The evidence indicates, however, that day nursery provision in my survey area was above the national average and the involvement of the van Leer Foundation in pre-school provision is not common throughout Britain.

Both the women interviewed, and their husbands, were disproportionately concentrated in low skilled manual employment and the majority were living on a low income. Most of the West Indian and white families rented their accommodation and a large minority of the Asian families did not have sole use of basic amenities. Only one black woman interviewed was born in Britain and the majority of black respondents had migrated between the ages of ten and twenty-four. The majority of West Indian respondents were born in Jamaica, and Sikhs from India were predominant in the Asian sample. These concentrations are significant in view of cultural differences between

the islands of the West Indies and variations in religious beliefs. The majority of West Indian mothers interviewed had not worked, or expected to work, in the West Indies and assumed that either their parents or husband would provide for them financially. Existing studies indicate that this is a predominantly middle class assumption (see Chapter 5) and possibly reflects a bias in my sample.

The interview schedule was designed from the perspective of a white, single, childless woman. Black women revised the schedule at the draft stage but nevertheless an inherent white bias remains. Since having conducted the interviews I have had two children and in retrospect I feel that the tone of the interviews would have differed had I, at the time, shared the respondents' experience of motherhood.

Since the major technique adopted in my research was that of interviews the data collected is largely based on what people said rather than on observation. The limitations of this method of data collection were greatest in the interviews with Personnel Officers since they were aware of what they should say and, particularly in issues connected with race, reticent in their comments because of anti-discrimination legislation. The semi-structured nature of the interviews with the women surveyed facilitated a more natural interaction but posed difficulties at the point of analysis. Because of the length of the interviews, there was often an opportunity to observe interaction between family members. When interviewing mothers, children were frequently present and although this provided the chance to observe mother/child interaction and relaxed the atmosphere, it also disrupted the interview. The majority of the Asian sample were interviewed via an interpreter and this altered the nature of the interviews which were

frequently shorter than those conducted with the white and West Indian mothers. Also, the Asian respondents were interviewed a year after the white and West Indian women.

III Implications of Research for Social Policy

Although my research was not specifically policy orientated in design my findings have implications for policy in several major areas. In particular my research demonstrates how social policy affects women of various ethnic groups differently. Also, my findings highlight the complexity of the relationship between women's role in the family, employment, social policy and cultural differences. As a result legislation will in itself have a limited impact on the lives of women unless current assumptions about the role of women are also challenged.

Education

Women waged workers, irrespective of ethnic origin, are concentrated in low paid and low skilled employment and this is the result of gender divisions within the labour market and the fact that, in addition to their role in production, women perform the role of reproducing and maintaining labour power. Thus any serious attempt at creating equality between men and women must involve challenging gender divisions both within the home and in the labour market. In this area education is of vital importance.

Education must challenge the assumption that women are primarily responsible for domestic labour and child care while men fulfil the role of breadwinner. Until men and women participate equally in child care the employment pattern of women will differ significantly from that of men, and while it is predominantly women who work part-time this form of

employment will be inferior, in terms of conditions of employment, compared with full-time work. If neither waged work nor child care was perceived as the principal preserve of either men or women the structure of waged work as it exists at present would be challenged in that both men and women would at time withdraw from the labour market to care for children, and both men and women would work part-time. This situation would challenge current assumptions about the respective roles of men and women within the labour market.

A re-definition of gender roles would have different implications for women of different ethnic origins since, as my research demonstrates, emphasis on women's role in the family differs between ethnic groups. A challenge to existing gender role divisions would conflict, in particular, with Asian culture but it is worth noting that my Asian respondents did feel that education is as important for girls as it is for boys, and implied that they wanted their daughters to have a greater degree of independence than themselves. The aspirations that Asian mothers hold for their daughters is an area which requires sensitive investigation.

School curriculum must in practice equip both boys and girls for work which has previously been the preserve of one or other sex. Demands for sex equality must, however, ultimately come from women themselves and education has an important role in promoting a strong self image in girls, extending their aspirations, and providing them with the confidence and ability to challenge discrimination. Similarly, education must recognise black culture, foster a powerful self image in black children and provide them with the tools to challenge racial oppression. This necessitates blacks and women being in positions of influence.

While education is the major impetus for long-term improvement in women's lives however, more immediate changes can be made which would increase the options of women. My research has demonstrated that employment patterns differ between women of different ethnic backgrounds and policy changes are needed to permit women (and men) a real choice between paid employment and child care or a combination of both.

Family Planning

Although a majority of my respondents, of all ethnic origins, agreed with family planning in principle only eight respondents had in fact planned any of their children. Reasons for this apparent contradiction were consistent across the three ethnic groups. The women were ignorant about conception and fertility control and were fearful of the side effects and safety of available contraception. Thus information about their bodies and contraception must be made available to these women before they can begin to make choices about if and when to have children. On a local level this may necessitate Family Planning Centres adopting a more broad based service and becoming more involved in the community rather than relying on a passive receptive role. Moreover, since there is no reason to believe that this contradiction, between a belief in family planning and the reality of unplanned pregnancies, is unique to Handsworth, the dissemination of information is likely to be appropriate in other geographical areas.

Employment

The type of employment sought by the women I interviewed varied between ethnic groups in that the emphasis among the West Indian women was on full-time work while the white mothers desired part-time employment which was compatible with child care arrangements. The

employed Asian women, like the white and West Indian respondents, were concentrated in low skilled factory work but homework was also a common form of employment amongst the Asian sample. My newspaper survey of job vacancies, and interviews with Personnel Officers, demonstrated the great demand for unskilled and semi-skilled factory work and part-time employment in 1978 and since that date unemployment in Birmingham has increased (see Prospects). An increase in employment opportunities is thus an obvious necessity particularly since blacks and mothers of young children experience greatest discrimination at times of high unemployment and neither the government nor employers are motivated to provide child care facilities except where a shortage of labour exists.

Job-Sharing

Demand for part-time employment was particularly high among the white mothers I interviewed and this finding is consistent with previous research. Part-time work, as it exists at present, is however characterised by low pay, poor promotion prospects, job insecurity and inferior fringe benefits. An expansion in job-sharing, whereby two people share the pay and benefits applicable to full-time employment, is thus a preferable alternative to an increase in part-time work. Job-sharing would make it more possible for mothers to return to employment after maternity leave and so increase the use of maternity leave provisions. Also, job-sharing provides an opportunity for men to participate both in waged work and child care. Although job-sharing is currently predominantly restricted to white collar employment it could be expanded within the manual sector and employers incur only marginal extra costs by employing two job-sharers rather than one full-time employee.

Homework

Homework is a form of employment especially common amongst Asian women for whom cultural and family constraints prevent them working outside the home. As my findings demonstrate, however, homework is characterized by extremely low pay and inferior conditions of employment. Homeworkers are a particularly vulnerable sector of the labour force and the homeworkers I interviewed were hesitant to talk about their work for fear of losing their jobs. Increased child care provision would increase the employment options of some homeworkers which would reduce the demand for homework and possibly lead to improved conditions of this form of employment.

One positive development in the field of homework is the organisation of childminders within the National Childminding Association which was established in 1977. Also, following the suggestion made in the Finer Report, some local authorities are directly employing childminders and subsidising the cost to mothers. This scheme should be expanded since it enables childminders to be paid a realistic wage which is not within the means of low-paid mothers using the service.

Provisions for Mothers to Return to the Labour Market

The limited evidence which is available demonstrates that working mothers are concentrated in lower paid and lower skilled jobs than women generally (see Chapter 2) and that when women return to employment after a break for childrearing they experience a decline in the skill level of the work obtained (Chaney, 1981). My respondents, of all ethnic groups, isolated child care as the major constraint on their employment options and an expansion in child care provision is the single most important

requirement for an increase in the status of employment of mothers. Abolition of the 'continuous service' qualification of present maternity leave provision, and the introduction of paternity leave rights, would however also improve the situation. Also, flexible working hours, nursing breaks and time off for sick children would make return to work more possible for women with children. Opportunities for further education and retraining should be increased, and my research indicates that West Indian mothers in particular regret their limited education and would welcome the chance of improving their situation. As Chaney (1981) has noted, however, training courses have little impact on women unless "they are organised in such a way that (a) they could obtain a place, (b) the courses would be held within school-hours and thus be accessible to women responsible for children, (c) there is a likelihood of employment at the end of the course" (p.70/1).

Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay

Existing sex discrimination and equal pay legislation has had little impact on the subordinate position of women within the British labour market. Few cases have nationally been taken to Industrial Tribunals and the success rate is low (see Chapter 3). The women I interviewed were aware of, but showed no inclination to challenge, existing gender divisions. The existence of specifically 'women's work' was justified, by the employers included in my survey, in terms of naturalistic assumptions, and lower pay for women was explained in terms of the assumption that a woman is financially supported by a man. Personnel Officers did not appear threatened by the possibility of action taken under the sex discrimination and equal pay legislation and were not hesitant in their remarks.

In the long term the employment position of women can only be improved significantly by the elimination of gender divisions both within the home and at work. In the short term, however, women should be encouraged to challenge existing gender divisions and low pay, under current legislation, and provided with effective support and guidance in their claims. Education and information about women's rights, and representation at Tribunals is essential. Although these areas have traditionally been the preserve of Trade Unions, Unions have remained largely ineffective in challenging the subordinate position of women workers and recent initiatives by the Citizens' Advice Bureau are to be welcomed. There is also scope for campaigns for the expansion of special training schemes, under Sections 47 and 48 of the Sex Discrimination Act, to provide women with the skills and training needed to move into traditionally 'male work'.

Existing legislation places the legal burden of proof in discrimination cases on the complainant and, since the task of proving discrimination is both difficult and complicated, the burden of proof should be distributed more evenly as suggested by the E.O.C. (1982). The impact of the Equal Pay Act, as it exists at present, is severely limited as a result of gender divisions within the labour market since many women are employed in jobs where there is no male equivalent. This situation could be improved by an amendment to admit equal pay for work of equal value and this should be introduced irrespective of the outcome of the infringement proceedings of the E.F.C. Commission (see Chapter 3).

Child Care Provision

Lack of satisfactory child care provision was a major constraint on the employment options of my respondents and any attempt to promote equal opportunities demands an expansion in day care facilities. This expansion should, however, take account of the requirements of mothers which, my research demonstrates, differs between ethnic groups. Women generally need local, cheap and flexible provision which provides a high standard of child care and is available as a right. While the majority of employed West Indian mothers, however, require full day provision since they work full-time, the emphasis among economically active white mothers is on part-time child care to coincide with their hours of employment. My Asian respondents, in particular, valued nursery provision for its educative role and this must be recognised. Indeed pre-school provision has a vital role in promoting a strong sense of identity in female and black children, in particular, and in challenging racist and sexist assumptions. Male and black child workers should be actively encouraged and the status and conditions of nursery nurses in general should be improved.

While child care provision is essential for mothers who wish to enter the labour market, the children of mothers who are not engaged in paid employment should not be excluded. My research demonstrates both the isolation of mothers and, among white and Asian women, adherence to the belief that young children should not be separated from their mother. These mothers should be encouraged to remain with their children should they so desire and this may go some way to reducing the isolation of mothers.

Social Security

The West Indian women I interviewed expressed a strong desire for financial independence, a large proportion of Asian respondents did not have control over any money and many, particularly white, mothers experienced guilt about working while their children were young. No mother of pre-school children should be forced by economic necessity to engage in waged labour and economic independence should be a right to all women. All the claimants I interviewed expressed a desire to work partly as a result of the inadequacy of social security benefits and the difficulties they had experienced in obtaining payments. Also, the claimants were acutely aware of the stigma attached to receiving benefits. Adequate benefits should be available as a right to all mothers and this could be achieved by a substantial increase in child benefit.

IV Prospects

A majority of my respondents, of all ethnic origins, expressed the desire to combine the roles of domestic and paid worker. Most of the women interviewed were married, or desired marriage, few regretted having had children and a majority wanted to continue, or commence, paid employment. At the time of the interviews many of the respondents had been unable to, or had experienced difficulty in obtaining paid work and/or satisfactory child care and I turn now to a consideration of their future prospects.

Employment Opportunities

In May 1979, during the period of my empirical research, 1.6 million people in Britain (4.9 per cent) were registered as unemployed. This figure had risen to 3.02 million (12.7 per cent) by April 1983 and unemployment in the West Midlands rose from 5.2 per cent in May 1979 to 16.1 per cent in April 1983 (Observer Business). Unemployment in inner Birmingham was running at almost 25 per cent in 1983 and was rising faster than anywhere else in Britain (Moseley and Kings Heath Labour Party). Moreover, during the last five years women have suffered a more rapid increase in registered unemployment than men (see Chapter 2) and, since many unemployed women do not register, women's unemployment statistics are a gross understatement of the true situation. Clearly, therefore, employment opportunities for women in Handsworth, in common with women nationally, have declined drastically since my empirical research. Mothers of young children and black women are likely to be hardest hit by this recession since, as Chapter 3 describes, many employers regard the employment of mothers of pre-school children as a second-rate substitute for childless women, and evidence since 1973 reveals that black workers are especially vulnerable as general unemployment increases (see Chapter 1). More recent figures indicate that unemployment amongst black women is particularly severe. Thus, while unemployment amongst white men increased by 263 per cent between 1973 and 1977 and white women's unemployment grew by 605 per cent, the comparable figure for black women is 1,110 per cent as against 485 per cent for black men (C.I.S.).

...of women who work a three-shift system, at just a wage of
£2.30 a day (Labour Forecast). Similarly, 65 per cent of the workers at

Women's employment prospects are declining as a result of the end of expansion in the service sector, restriction of public spending, decline in manufacturing, the introduction of new technology and investment abroad. Between August and October 1980 3,000, mostly clerical, central government jobs were lost. Manufacturing output in Britain declined by 19 per cent between the second quarter of 1979 and the last quarter of 1982 and recruitment in the industry has fallen from 150,000 a month in 1976 to 100,00 a month. This will affect both white and black workers. Jobs in the clerical, selling and banking sectors are threatened by new technology, in addition to a reduction of workers in the manufacturing sector. It is estimated that new information technology will result in the loss of 500,000 jobs currently performed by women (C.I.S. p.24). Most severely affected will be clerical jobs where two-fifths of women workers are presently employed, although black women are under-represented in this sector of employment.

Jobs in Britain are being lost as a result of the transfer of investment to countries where labour costs are cheaper. Birmingham has been hit by the transfer of capital by Dunlop and Lucas who have reduced their U.K. labour force by 40,000 since 1979 while expanding their labour force abroad. Investment is being re-directed to countries which provide a cheap and powerless labour force, and Dunlop currently employs 1,025 workers in South Africa on wages below the Supplementary Living Level set by the E.E.C. This cheap and powerless labour force frequently comprises mainly women and the workforce in Dunlop's subsidiary in the Philippines consists entirely of women who work a three-shift system, six days a week for £1.20 a day (Labour Forward). Similarly, 85 per cent of the workers at

Polytex Garment Factory in Sri Lanka's Free Trade Zone are women who are paid 50p a day (Outwrite).

Attempts to reduce labour costs may possibly result in an increase in homework, which as Chapter 3 describes is notoriously badly paid. Fluctuations in this sector of employment particularly affect Asian women but the extent of homeworking is extremely difficult to estimate.

White mothers are concentrated in part-time work and the availability of this form of employment fluctuates as the general economic climate changes. Part-time workers are an extremely flexible supply of labour since there is a large demand for this form of employment and part-timers can be made redundant more easily than full-time workers. Twilight shifts are introduced and closed to respond to booms and slumps in the economy. In view of current uncertainties about the direction of the economy, therefore, it is possible that part-time, rather than full-time, labour will be employed as industries show signs of possible expansion. Since there is little evidence that gender divisions within the labour market are being eroded, however, employment of part-time women workers is only appropriate in predominantly female occupations.

Implications of Unemployment for West Indian, Asian and White Women

The employment prospects of women of all ethnic origins are increasingly limited. All women are suffering the effects of rising unemployment, diminishing job opportunities and low pay, within a labour market which continues to exhibit rigid gender divisions, while employment and maternity rights are reduced. In addition to these restraints however mothers and black women suffer the further oppression of discrimination.

Women are being forced out of the labour market and, as noted by the E.O.C., this fact "together with the view, increasingly openly expressed, that the place of women is in the home, ... has had the effect at once of encouraging an inclination to shelve equal opportunity policies as a luxury which the nation cannot afford, and to increase the sense of frustration and resentment amongst many women" (Fourth Annual Report). Much unemployment amongst women is not registered in the statistics and in the present economic crisis, when a major aim of government is to hold down the level of wages, women's domestic labour fulfils a vital function. Women generally are suffering as a result of rising unemployment but my research demonstrates that the implications of unemployment vary between women of different ethnic origins.

A woman's earnings are essential for a large number of families and, since married women who do not pay the full National Insurance contribution are not entitled to unemployment benefit and no cohabiting woman can claim supplementary benefit, when working women lose their jobs the effects on family income are frequently drastic. This applies to families of all ethnic groups but West Indian women in particular are likely to suffer as a result of unemployment. A higher proportion of West Indian, compared with white, mothers work outside the home, they are concentrated in full-time employment and, as my research demonstrates, they strongly value the financial independence which a wage provides. Among the West Indian mothers I interviewed there was an emphasis on keeping their money separate from that of their husbands and unemployment for West Indian women has implications beyond its effect on the household budget.

Unemployment for West Indian women commonly involves a shift from full-time employment and financial independence to a situation where they are dependant on a man or state benefit and my respondents perceived this predicament as intolerable. Moreover, unemployment rates among West Indian women are particularly acute.

A lower percentage of Asian, compared with West Indian, women are economically active but many Asian families are forced by economic necessity to break with tradition and allow women to work. The majority of employed Asian women work full-time. Thus the loss of earnings amongst Asian women has a drastic effect on the household economy. Unemployment amongst Asian men contradicts the cultural definition of their role of providing economic support for the family.

The women in my survey emphasized the value of waged work for the relief it provided from the boredom and isolation of domestic labour and, in contrast with their husbands/boyfriends, few had a social life. Women at home with young children are especially vulnerable to depression and several studies have indicated that mothers who work outside the home are more resistant to mental illness (Feld, 1973; Brown et. al., 1975). In particular Moss and Plewis (1977) found that non-employed mothers who want to work may be at greater risk of experiencing mental stress than those who are not faced with this conflict. This situation is likely to be most acute for West Indian women because of the importance they attach to waged work and as a result of general discontentment with their life in Britain. Several studies (Corell Barnes, 1975; Moody and Stroud, 1967; Prince, 1967) have noted the high incidence of depression among West Indian

224 per cent over the same period and there has been a 52 per cent rise in female membership in the Association of Engineering Women (AEMW).

mothers in Britain which appears a direct result of colonialism and discrimination. The West Indian mothers interviewed by Corell Barnes described the social isolation and pressures that they had experienced as a result of 'the move to a way of life that was expected to be familiar and found to be alien and confusing'. Extreme isolation is also common amongst Asian women in Britain, particularly those who conform to the purdah system (Dahya, 1975; Khan, 1976; Wilson, 1978), but waged work for Asian women is often not a possible escape from isolation because it conflicts with cultural definitions of the role of women.

Although unemployment amongst women is considered politically and economically more acceptable than male unemployment the effects on women are great. One positive aspect of women's employment situation in recent years is, however, that women are not passively accepting closures and redundancies and in many cases black, and particularly Asian, women are leading the fight. This is evidenced by the disputes at Imperial, Decca, Grunwick, Furrers and the Chix bubblegum factory at Slough. More recently 240 workers occupied the Lee Jeans factory in Greenock when the American VF Corporation decided to close the plant. The part played by Asian women in industrial disputes contradicts their traditional role within the family and this conflict is worthy of further investigation.

Also, over the last decade female membership of individual trade unions has increased substantially. The Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs (ASTMS) witnessed a massive 771 per cent increase in women members from 9,400 in 1958 to 77,200 in 1978. Similarly female membership of the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) increased by 236 per cent over the same period and there has been a 52 per cent rise in female membership in the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (AUEW).

Child Care Provision

During the 1980s a major aim of government has been to reduce public expenditure, and the provision of child care facilities has remained a low priority. Women have increasingly been denied access to paid employment and the government's recent Think Tank - the Family Policy Group - emphasises the role of women within the family and proposes that mothers should be 'encouraged' to stay at home. The breakdown in traditional family structures is postulated as the cause of juvenile discontent and the F.P.G. report asks 'what more can be done to encourage families to reassume responsibilities taken on by the state' (quoted in Outwrite). The provision of adequate state child care facilities contradicts this philosophy, and, particularly at times of high unemployment, employers are not motivated to provide child care facilities.

Between 1973 and 1977 the major increase in child care provision was in the form of childminders. While the number of places in local authority day nurseries rose by only 643 during this period the number of places provided by registered minders increased by 19,746, and the extent of unregistered minding is unknown. Childminding offers great advantages to both employers and governments since it requires minimal or no state investment, is largely unsubsidised, and contracts and expands with demand. It is a form of provision encouraged by governments since the 'cost' of childminding is largely met by children, mothers and minders. Mothers using childminders frequently experience feelings of dissatisfaction with the service provided, children suffer the consequences of inadequate care and minders receive low pay and poor conditions of employment.

There remain stark regional variations in the provision of local authority child care facilities and in 1977 fifteen local authorities provided no day nurseries. Birmingham provides more child days in day nurseries per thousand children under five than the national average and between 1978 and 1983 the number of places in day nurseries, nursery centres and day care centres in Birmingham increased by 183. The ratio of staff to children in city day nurseries has however been reduced as a result of public expenditure cuts and the present policy is that three nursery nurses have to leave a nursery before one replacement is appointed.

Child care facilities in Britain remain insufficient to meet demand and there is little immediate prospect of a substantial increase in either state or work-place provision. Childminding, both registered and unregistered, is likely to continue as the major form of child care provision. The present Conservative government emphasises the role of women within the family and is not committed to a state-subsidised network of child care provision. According to Lynda Chalker, Junior Minister in the Department of Health, three options are available to women: "women who can afford to make private child-care arrangements should be free to do so: others will choose to take time out from paid work to look after their own young children: others again will have to look to volunteers in the local community to provide child-care facilities without government cash"

(Guardian quoted in Hughes et. al. p. 248). As Chapter 3 describes, the effects of this policy are that many women are prevented from engaging in waged work, and are particularly susceptible to mental illness as a result, while others are severely limited in their choice of employment and child care options.

Employment Situation of West Indian, White and Asian Mothers

Mothers of all ethnic origins suffer the effects of inadequate child care facilities and increasingly limited employment options but the major thrust of my research is that the employment situation of West Indian, white and Asian mothers exhibits both similarities and differences and I show that this is the result of a complex inter-relationship between several important factors. Women of all ethnic origins are concentrated in low paid and low status employment and this is the result of rigid gender divisions within the British labour market and the fact that, in addition to their role as waged workers, women are expected to perform the essential role of reproducing and maintaining labour power. Recent state and employers' policies rest on the assumption that waged work for women is secondary to their primary role within the family, and child care is largely defined as the responsibility of mothers. As a result, the degree of occupational crowding and disparities of job levels and earnings between men and women in Britain are generally much greater than any difference between women of different ethnic origins, and mothers of young children occupy an inferior labour market position compared with childless women. Despite these shared characteristics, however, West Indian, Asian and white female waged workers differ in the proportion who are economically active, the type of work they perform, and the unemployment rates they experience.

My research demonstrates that waged work amongst women cannot be understood purely in terms of economic factors. Cultural variations in the interpretation of gender roles and the ideology of motherhood have a significant impact on the proportion of women who engage in paid labour and the number of hours worked. Cultural constraints frequently limit the

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employment options of Asian women and confine them to working in an all-female environment or at home. Cultural differences do not however explain differences in the type of work performed by white and West Indian women which are the result of racial discrimination and the fact that black workers are often only employed where no other labour is available. The higher unemployment rates experienced by West Indian women are also largely explicable in terms of discrimination.

Differences exist between black and white workers, between workers of different ethnic origins and between mothers and childless women. My research has shown that approaches to women's waged labour which treat all women the same and/or concentrate on either the structure of the labour market or on the role of women within the family ignore the complex relationship which exists between women's employment, their family position, ethnicity and social policy.

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APPENDIX

1. RESEARCH CHRONICLE

Unlike the descriptions of research as a smooth and logical process, which are sometimes presented in methodological textbooks, my research was characterised by periods of uncertainty about what I was doing, why I was doing it and mild panic about how the mass of data could ever be organised into a coherent account. The emphasis of the research changed both as a result of the research process itself and my personal development during the period. Indeed even the role I assumed during fieldwork was confused, shifting between researcher, friend and counsellor. Sometimes the research was interesting, even exciting, but it was also stressful, tiring, boring and frustrating. In short the research was virtually my life and at least once the overwhelming feeling I had was to abandon the project because I resented the physical and emotional demands it imposed on me. At times I felt very isolated and support and reassurance was crucial since I constantly questioned why I had ever embarked on something which dominated my life to such an extent.

Choice of Subject of Research

Very little thought was involved in the decision to embark on post-graduate research. I was offered a two-year S.S.R.C. research grant and asked to make a fairly immediate decision. Basically it seemed too good an opportunity to reject. The procedure by which I obtained the grant meant that I was not forced to perform the task of thinking through and preparing a detailed research proposal. Instead I floundered for several months through the then 'race relations' literature uncertain about the direction of my research and I soon realised that not being required to

write a research proposal immediately and only postponed the necessity of formulating a research plan.

While not having a definite topic of research my choice was influenced by several broad considerations. The geographical area of the research and broad subject of race was stipulated. The undergraduate courses which had most interested me were those of Women in Society and Social Policy so my thoughts were directed to those areas and to the relationship between the two. Also, since I identify and relate more easily with women than men I felt that, in terms of methodological considerations, I would feel less inhibited about interviewing women. Eventually I decided the broad area of my research would be the relationship between women's employment and child care since this would incorporate both my interest in social policy and my desire to concentrate on women. I wanted to find out the extent to which women are forced into low paid, undesirable jobs because of lack of child care facilities.

At this stage I was becoming increasingly involved with a local Women's Group where we constantly attempted to understand the relationship between the personal and political and locate our individual experiences within a wider structure. Within the group we considered the dominant definitions of women's roles - how we 'ought' to feel and behave in relation to men, work, children etc. and we compared this with our actual experience. We talked about the various 'choices' women make throughout their lives (work, marriage, children) and concluded that in reality we rarely choose; women frequently 'do' because that is what we and others expect. Dominant definitions of womanhood are powerful.

Although these discussions were often confused, they were exciting and the experience of the Women's Group influenced my research in several aspects. First, I was anxious to know how other women perceived themselves, how they felt they 'ought' to behave and whether they conformed with these ideological definitions. I was aware of the high economic activity rate of West Indian, compared with white, mothers and was interested to find out whether cultural differences in gender role definition were part of the explanation. Did West Indian mothers perceive their role differently from white mothers? I felt very critical of much of the literature I had read about black childrearing because it made the assumption that white middle class methods are correct. Did black women want to conform to the predominant ideology in Britain which states that the mother should take full responsibility for the care of her pre-school child but are prevented so doing because of economic necessity, or did they perceive motherhood differently? Thus the scope of the research had widened from simply considering the extent to which mothers are prevented from working outside the home by the practical constraints of childrearing. In addition I was interested in the extent to which mothers are prevented from engaging in economic activity by dominant definitions of the role of women.

Also, my research methodology was influenced by the Women's Group in that I wanted to start with the personal experiences of women which I would then locate within a wider structure. Having spent several months reading background literature I was impatient to speak with women about their experiences. Once I had conducted the empirical research I would attempt to locate it theoretically rather than attempting to formulate a precise hypothesis prior to

field work. Thus, having formulated the aim of my research as an examination of the extent to which white and West Indian¹ mothers are prevented from working outside the home, or restricted in their choice of employment by (1) practical constraints of child care and (2) dominant definitions of motherhood I felt the need to become involved with the area in which the research would be based.

Establishing Contact with Handsworth

Having decided that it was necessary to establish contacts within Handsworth I felt apprehensive about this process. First, I was unclear about the actual mechanics of becoming involved in the area - where should I start? In addition, I was aware of the hostility which was felt about Rex and Tomlinson's study,² particularly by community workers in the area, and was concerned about my reception. Finally, because of the image of Handsworth as a violent place which is presented by the media, I felt some anxiety about venturing into the area. Consequently prior to my first visit I felt insecure and uncertain about what I was attempting to achieve and anxious about how people would respond. Fortunately actual contact with the place and people relieved much of the anxiety which I had developed through speculation.

My immediate impression of Handsworth, formed while walking along the major shopping areas of Lozells and Soho Road, was of somewhere full of people, noise and colour. Groups of young Rastas and Asian women in saris appeared most prominent. Reggae music, Indian sweet centres and earl stores dominated the

1. Although at this stage, only West Indian and white mothers were to be interviewed the possibility of including Asian mothers was always a consideration. Consequently, I noted information which would be relevant should I subsequently extend the research to include Asian women as in fact was the case.

2. Rex, John and Sally Tomlinson, Colonial Immigrants in a British City

space. Estate Agents displayed cheap substandard properties, and rented accommodation was advertised in shop windows. I saw few white people, which reflects the older age profile of the white population, but Asian men and older West Indians were there if I looked - they simply lacked the visual presence of the Rastas and sari clad women. The area felt alive, but not threatening, and I felt excitement and curiosity rather than the anticipated fear.

My first direct contact with the people of Handsworth was via the Action Centre since a friend of mine knew a community worker at the Centre. This introduction was particularly valuable since it not only gave me a starting place from which to gain access but also enhanced my credibility since my sponsor was well respected by the people at the Action Centre. Despite this introduction, however, I was nevertheless subjected to fairly rigorous scrutiny before information, contacts and support were offered. I was questioned about my motives for conducting the research, the aims and methodology of the survey, the funding and accountability of the project. Hostility was expressed about research workers who conducted projects in Handsworth simply to achieve academic success without concern for the people or the area. My desire to speak with people living and working in Handsworth prior to formulating a rigid research plan was viewed positively and my credibility seemed to increase dramatically with my involvement with a local women's group and participation in campaigns. Many of the women in the women's group were actively involved in Handsworth and they provided me with valuable introductions particularly since their support of my work encouraged my

acceptance by other community workers. While it would have been theoretically possible to conduct my research without the support of community workers I would have found the r hostility demoralising and I thus felt that a crucial stage in the research process had been achieved once I had gained acceptance in this area. It was as though a number of, predominantly white male, community workers adopted the role of gatemen to research access and, while not having the ability to obstruct completely, their co-operation was valuable.

For three months I immersed myself in the area and spoke with a variety of people, although the emphasis increasingly focused upon those connected with child care, and I regularly attended various forms of child care provision. During this period I was unsure about exactly what I was investigating and the interactions I had were not structured by questionnaires. I simply kept a detailed diary of interviews, visits etc.

I spoke with nursery school and day nursery staff about what they felt is the aim of pre-school care and their opinion of facilities in Birmingham. How did they select children to attend? Did they perceive any variation between children of different cultural groups? What did they feel were the reasons for these differences and how did the nursery accommodate variations? Play group leaders and child minder organisers were asked similar questions in addition to enquiries about funding and registration, cultural differences between minders etc. I also observed what happened in the nurseries and schools and spent time with a child minder organiser visiting minders and observed, in particular, the recognition, or ignorance of, the needs of minority children.

The group I felt most inhibited about approaching was the childminders whom I contacted while at playgroups and at their social

evenings. I think the inhibition arose partly because making contact often involved interrupting a group and because my role was confused. The playgroup organisers had asked me to 'fit in' with the activities and neither myself nor the minders knew exactly what I was doing. In retrospect I think I would have felt more comfortable with a strictly defined role and a questionnaire but this more distant approach would possibly have inhibited the trust and confidence which I felt some minders did eventually feel towards me. In the main I spoke to the minders about their personal biographies and their experience of minding.

This emphasis on child care provision emerged without consideration as to why I was devoting so much attention and time to visiting pre-school facilities. I became involved with a play group organised by the women's group I attended and from this introduction visits appeared to take on a momentum of their own. At meetings, and via child workers I knew, I would meet other nursery staff who invited me to spend time at their nurseries/groups. At this stage I had no clear objective and initially I assumed that if I spent sufficient time at child care provision interesting data would simply emerge. After several weeks, however, I felt I was floundering and trying so hard to observe everything that in effect I was observing very little. I felt I needed to focus my attention and embarked on a more systematic (albeit abortive) investigation of the recognition of the needs of black children. Mid-way through this project I questioned its relevance for my overall research framework, acknowledged that I was more interested to embark on interviewing my sample of mothers, and gradually stopped my visits.

At the time I felt that this episode in the research was a waste of effort but in retrospect I realise that it was valuable in that it familiarised me with the area, the various forms of child care and the people involved in Handsworth. This subsequently proved crucial in that it provided me with support and contact during the period when I interviewed respondents when I often experienced feelings of isolation and uncertainty. Also, once having established contacts it meant that I could subsequently obtain information quickly and without formality.

Moreover, although my involvement with child care provision yielded little hard data which I subsequently included in the thesis, it did provoke useful trains of informal investigation which enabled me to build up an impressionistic picture of the three groups of mothers and I used my interviews to investigate these impressions. For example, when petitioning for more day nursery provision I was puzzled by the reluctance of Asian women to sign. It was as though the Asian women did not feel that it was anything to do with them and if the woman was with a man she immediately turned to him to deal with the issue. When discussing this observation with an Asian friend she pointed out that signing a petition was perceived as a political act, something not directly involved with the home and family and thus beyond the scope of the role of women, as defined by Asian society. The Asian women's reluctance to sign the petition thus reflected the belief, expressed by my respondents, that men are more proficient than women at dealing with issues external to the family (see Chapter 10:3). The preserve of women is defined as strictly within the home while men are expected to make all decisions in issues

external to the immediate confines of the family. Indeed even where the family crosses the boundary into the external world Asian women are dependent upon male authority. Thus when a mother and toddler outing was arranged by one play group I attended all the Asian women were dependent on their husband's permission to go on the visit. Similarly although Asian fathers rarely involved themselves with child care within the family they frequently collected children from play groups which are perceived as educational: education is defined as part of the external world. My Asian respondents believed that one of the roles of a 'good' father is encouraging children in their education (Chapter 10:4).

Thus, through my involvement in petitioning, which I had not anticipated would yield significant data, I began to build up a picture of the respective roles of men and women as defined by Asian culture. Moreover, this impression that Asian women are expected to submit to dependence on men, particularly in matters external to the family, was intensified when an Asian mother, who attended play group, was deserted by her husband. The situation was particularly distressing for the woman involved because, without a man, she no longer had a place within Asian society and was defined as an inadequate woman because she had 'failed' in her marriage. Moreover, my interpretation of this situation was substantiated by the responses I received from my Asian respondents to questions about their perception of marriage - marriage was seen as the only option available, to be unmarried was not a possibility (Chapter 10:1).

Few Asian children attended the day nurseries I visited which reflects the low level of economic activity amongst Asian women which in turn is a consequence of cultural beliefs about the role of women and child rearing. The vast majority of my Asian respondents expressed the view that the mother is

always the best person to look after a child and all believed that a mother should give up her life for her children (Chapter 10:4). These women considered it irresponsible for a mother to leave her child in the care of an unrelated woman. Thus where Asian mothers used child minders they frequently chose white minders because the Asian community was less likely to find out that the mother was, as she believed, abandoning her responsibilities. Also, the opportunity for their child to learn English with a white woman was seen as an additional bonus. Education, and speaking English, were valued highly and thus white day nurseries, which were perceived as places which simply cared for the children of working mothers, were dismissed, play groups and nursery schools were regarded with approval because of their perceived educational role (Chapter 10:5).

By contrast West Indian mothers were generally enthusiastic about day nurseries and were anxious to sign our petition. Many felt that women other than the mother can look after a child as satisfactorily and showed no inhibitions about stating that they wanted a break from their children. Indeed admission to a black community nursery was a lot dependent upon the employment of the mother:

"It's not only for mothers who work. Even if the mother does not work children need to get away from mothers as much as mothers need to get away from children."
(Mrs. Morgan, Marcus Garvey Day Care Centre)

White mothers tended to be reluctant to sign our petition for more day nursery provision and often expressed the opinion that it is wrong for a mother to work while she has pre-school children. Similarly white mothers would frequently appear defensive about leaving their child with someone else while they worked outside the home.

Thus through my involvement with the campaign for more nursery provision and during my visits to child care centres, where I talked with mothers and staff, I gradually built up an impressionistic picture of the three groups of women I would interview. I was made aware of seemingly significant differences in attitudes towards child care, with Asian women expressing the belief that a child's mother should care for the child full-time, white women exhibiting contradictory and confused feelings and West Indian mothers believing that others can, and should, care for the child as well as the mother. In terms of methodology this episode in the research was surprising since while my visits to child care provision provided less data than I had anticipated, the afternoons I spent petitioning, which I had not perceived as part of my research, were particularly valuable because of the insights the exercise provoked.

Sample Selection

During the period when I was visiting child care agencies I was uncertain about how I would obtain my sample and considered the possibility of contacting mothers of pre-school children via day nurseries, play groups, child minders etc. However, this possibility was eventually rejected because the respondents would all be using official forms of child care provision and, as Chapter 3 demonstrates, previous surveys had indicated that a majority of mothers employ unofficial sources such as relatives, friends, or unregistered child minders.

A hospital was also seriously considered as a possible place from which to obtain my sample since a large proportion of West Indian women are employed in the National Health Service. Also, a hospital employs staff with a range of skills and operates a shift system. However, this possibility was also

rejected because such a sample would be in a sense self selected since it is not necessarily a cross section of women who work within a hospital. Also, this method obviously did not include unemployed mothers and I was anxious to include such women in the survey.

Other possible sources of a sample which were dismissed were doctors' lists, health visitors and schools and the method eventually selected was a sub-sample of that used by Rex and Tomlinson¹.

Since I employed a sub-sample of a previous survey, certain information about the households was already available and consequently the process of selecting my respondents was in itself informative. For example, during the process of extracting information from the 1976 questionnaires I was made aware of stark differences in household structure between the three ethnic groups. I was surprised by the large proportion of one-parent families among the West Indian population and particularly by the number of children in these families. The impression I formed was substantiated by the statistics since single-parent families constituted 17 per cent of the total West Indian sample (Ratcliffe p.69).² The vast majority of these families were headed by women who had suffered some form of marital breakdown or were single, and 37 per cent of these families contained at least four children (Ratcliffe p.69). By contrast only 3 per cent of the Asian sample comprised single-parent families and, significantly, none of these cases had come about as a consequence of marital breakdown or illegitimacy (Ratcliffe p.71). These divergent statistics reflect strong cultural differences in family organization and imply variations in cultural definitions of the role of women.

1. Chapter 8, Background of Sample, provides a fairly detailed account of the procedure by which the eventual sample was obtained.
2. Ratcliffe, Peter, Racism and Reaction. A Profile of Handsworth, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981.

The fact that all my Asian sample were married reflects the strong cultural pressures on Asian women to marry since there is no place within Asian society for unattached females. This statistical observation was substantiated by my impressions formed during the early stages of field work and subsequently by the interviews I conducted.

Design of Interview Schedule

Because of the sensitive nature of some of the areas I wished to cover in the research a fairly flexible and informal interview procedure was required. Unstructured interviewing fulfilled these requirements but I felt that some structure was necessary because of the difficulty of consolidating the material which would have been obtained via this approach, particularly in view of the large number of respondents involved. Semi-structured interviewing provides a degree of flexibility and gives the respondents scope to develop their views at length whilst at the same time ensures that a certain set of relevant topics are discussed. This method consequently appeared consistent with the aims of the research and was therefore adopted. Also, the use of a tape recorder appeared appropriate because I would have been unable to write down the complete responses I received, and a tape recorder allowed me to concentrate on listening and asking questions uncomplicated by the necessity of writing down answers.

It was at the stage of writing the final interview schedule that I felt it was necessary to have a clear definition of the aims of the survey and the changing emphasis of the draft schedules I wrote demonstrates the way in which the research developed. My first draft was written while

I was concerned with the restrictions placed on maternal employment simply by the practical constraints of child care and ignored the emotional factor. Questions concentrated almost entirely on the form of child care provision used by the respondents and its compatibility with their paid employment.

I found writing the final interview schedule difficult. Firstly, because of having to define the precise areas of my research and the difficulty of assessing what is going to be of interest prior to conducting the interviews. Also, there was the problem of the order of the questions and their wording. At the stage of writing the interview schedule the possibility of including Asian women in my sample was extremely vague and did not influence the design. The definite inclusion of Asian respondents would have made a difference to the schedule, for example I would have been reluctant to have included the direct section on contraception but in the event these questions were not as sensitive as I had anticipated. Writing the questions for the West Indian sample I was aware of the inevitability of a white bias in the questions I was to ask and attempted to minimise this by discussing the schedule with several black women prior to interviewing. Also, I found it helpful talking to others about their experience of interviewing and in this context Peter Moss was particularly helpful. Careful consideration of interview designs previously employed provided additional assistance.

While the interview schedule was written without a clear hypothesis to test, it was based on a background of reading and talking about my research and consequently I had built up an impressionistic picture of the respondents and areas of interest.

Initial Contact with Respondents

Seven months were spent conducting the interviews and a large percentage of this time was consumed by repeated attempts to establish initial contact. During this period the research took over my life. I was in Handsworth all day, almost every day, walking from one part of the survey area to another attempting to catch a respondent who was at home. However, although this process was very time consuming, it was valuable in that I became involved in the area often meeting former respondents at the shops and returning to their homes. Also, walking around the area gave me an impression of the atmosphere and I could understand the fear and isolation expressed by many respondents, particularly those living in high rise flats in Newtown; the area itself is depressing.

Conducting the actual interviews was usually enjoyable, and at times exciting, but the process of attempting to contact respondents was frequently frustrating, lonely and boring. Consequently contact with people I had met during the early stages of my research was essential. Being able to talk to someone at lunch time often gave me the incentive to continue my attempts at contacting respondents during the afternoon and evening. Occasionally I conducted two interviews in one day but found this very tiring and somewhat confusing. While interviewing Asian respondents the interpreter accompanied me and the hours we spent together were valuable as Mrs. Islam, the interpreter, provided insights into past and future interviews.

The Asian respondents were more frequently at home when we called that the West Indian and white women and this was a reflection of their

lower rate of economic activity outside the home, and cultural restrictions on their movements generally. However, although in this respect it was easier to contact the Asian respondents, Asian men frequently made access problematic. Like white and West Indian men, Asian husbands assumed it was them I wished to interview, frequently stating that their wives would be unable to take part because they would not know the answers. Asian men, however, were much more rigorous in questioning the interpreter about the interview, asking what questions would be asked and why we were asking them. The interpreter found this process of gaining access via Asian men very difficult and would always say that I was a teacher since this encouraged a favourable response. Once men had given permission for their wives to be interviewed the wish to conduct the interview without their presence was again the subject of long negotiation. The vast majority of men, of all ethnic groups, (1) assumed that I wanted to interview the man of the house, (2) asked questions about the interview before calling their wives, and (3) were reluctant to allow me to conduct the interview with the woman on her own. They appeared threatened by the possibility that their wives would express negative feelings about them, and in order to prevent this possibility some men maintained surveillance during the interview. Most men assumed that they had the right to know exactly what their wives were to participate in, implied they could influence responses and that they had the ultimate power of preventing their wives from taking part. Indeed where men refused to allow the interview to be conducted without them they did in fact influence responses, sometimes taking direct responsibility for answering the questions or contradicting

their wives' responses. Minimal protest was expressed by the women. The assumptions made by the men in this situation reflect the dominant role of men within the family and the control they impose upon women. During initial contact with the respondents Asian men were more persistent in their intervention than the white or West Indian husbands, and similarly the interviews revealed that Asian women generally are more subservient to the demands of their husbands than the other groups of women. A prominent example of the control exercised by men over their wives, which was made evident during the interviews, was the prevention of women engaging in social or economic activities outside of the home.

On several occasions interviews with Moslem women demonstrated the practice of segregating unrelated men and women. The interpreter and myself visited one household when there was a gathering for friends and all the men were in the front room while the women were in the back; children mediated between the two. Similarly, on one occasion, the interpreter and myself were confined to a house for over half an hour after completing the interview because the Asian husband was talking to his friend on the doorstep and it was obviously inappropriate for us to pass.

Once I gained access to the respondents themselves the majority were eager to participate¹ in the survey although feelings of inadequacy, e.g. "I won't be any good", "I won't know the answers", were often expressed.

1. Only 5 women refused to participate and more information regarding these refusals is provided in Chapter 8.

This enthusiasm, I feel, reflects the degree of isolation and boredom experienced by many mothers. Also, the appearance of the interpreter and the fact that I am a woman was a crucial factor in gaining access to the Asian women. For whatever reason, the women were keen to take part and I rarely had to provide any incentive or justification for participation other than the opportunity for the respondents to talk about themselves and their lives.

Interview Procedure

The majority of the interviews were conducted in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere and I was not aware of racial or class hostility being directed towards me from the respondents themselves although in several instances the older children of the West Indian mothers exhibited obvious suspicion. The fact that the interviews were conducted in the homes of the respondents appeared to highlight our common experience of being women. Before the interview commenced the respondents frequently commented on their domestic chores and, for example, when the bread van drivers were on strike we would discuss which stores still had bread and I would often go to the shops for the respondents. Thus it was an atmosphere in which it felt comfortable for me to follow the women into the kitchen when they made a drink and, for example, to feed their baby. During the course of the interviews it seemed possible for the women and myself to relate to each other because the interview covered areas common to all women. The respondents often asked about my life and opinions but I always postponed discussion of these issues until the end of the interview. Only two respondents maintained

a reluctance to take part in the interview and appeared relieved when it was finished.

Where possible an attempt was made to interview the women alone, or with only their young children present, but obviously this was not always possible. As the Table below demonstrates, 18 of the West Indian and Asian respondents had visitors who stayed for a short time during the interview, while this occurred with only one white woman, and this finding was compatible with my earlier impression that white mothers are more isolated within the home.

<u>During Interview</u>	<u>W I.</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Asian</u>
Respondent Alone	9	8	3
Respondent + child/ren	11	4	3
Respondent + husband	3	-	-
Respondent, husband + child/ren	-	1	-
Respondent + interpreter	-	-	2
Respondent, interpreter + husband	-	-	1
Respondent, interpreter + child/ren	-	-	3
Respondent + sister/in-law	1	-	2
Respondent + mother/in-law	-	-	1
Respondent + friend + child/ren	1	1	-
Others briefly	6	1	7

A woman's response to the interview is likely to vary depending on whether or not others are present and generally those interviews conducted when the respondent was alone, or when only young children were also present, were longer than in other circumstances. Indeed even the presence of very

young children, who were not aware of the conversation, affected the interaction since mothers frequently got embarrassed, distracted and frustrated by the disruption caused by the children. Sometimes, however, the presence of children relaxed the atmosphere and playing with the children often relieved inhibitions and tension. Moreover, observing the interactions between mother and child was often revealing; for example it was evident that Asian mothers were more tolerant of their male, compared with female, children and this may reflect the superior position of the male within Asian society. In the main, however, the research was based on what the women said they do rather than on observing their behaviour.

The presence of men tended to be more inhibiting. Two West Indian and one Asian man insisted on being present, despite my request that the interview was conducted without them, and they frequently interrupted with questions about why I was asking the questions and what I was going to do with the responses. The Asian woman often looked to her husband to respond to the question and one West Indian man assumed responsibility for answering and, despite my protests, completed his wife's health questionnaire saying he knew better than his wife. In the two interviews with Asian women where the husband and mother-in-law was present the interpreter did not think it advisable to pursue the questions on contraception, and where the mother-in-law was present the interpreter did not ask questions about household income. The interpreter was reluctant to ask these questions because of the intimate nature of the subject and she thought that the relatives would object to their wife/daughter discussing it with an outsider.

In one Asian interview two sister-in-laws took part simultaneously but this proved unsatisfactory since one respondent dominated the responses and the other simply agreed. However, where two West Indian sisters participated in the interview together the exchanges which took place between them were constructive in that views were explored which otherwise might not have been revealed.

Even where husbands, or in the case of Asian women mother-in-laws, were in the house, but not in the room, the respondents seemed very aware of their presence and, for example, spoke quietly and ensured the door was tightly shut. Indeed even recent contact between couples influenced responses and this point was vividly demonstrated in the case of one West Indian respondent who was physically assaulted by her husband just prior to, and indeed during, the interview and whose responses were obviously influenced by this interaction. This incident, moreover, was a horrific example of the potential power that men hold over women despite race or class differences. The respondent explained how her husband frequently physically abused her, and his two daughters, and yet the women all felt there was nothing they could do. The women were financially and emotionally dependent on this man and, moreover, the fear of violence prevented them from attempting to escape from this relationship.

Fifteen of the 27 Asian interviews were conducted via an interpreter and this obviously affected the interaction significantly. The interpreter herself was ideal since she was one of the first respondents and thus shared important characteristics with the other women interviewed. She was an Indian Moslem

married to a Pakistani man and educated in Britain with the result that she spoke several languages fluently and was also familiar with differences between the cultures. I spent a lot of time with Mrs. Islam, the interpreter, both in her home and around Handsworth and this contact was valuable in that she often spoke about her life and the backgrounds of the women interviewed. While Mrs. Islam was ideal, however, the method of interpreting used was somewhat restricting. Because of the unstructured nature of the interview schedule it was necessary to know the response to earlier questions before proceeding. Thus, either the interpreter needed to have a clear understanding of the aims of the research and conduct the interview without my intervention, or interpretation had to take place during the course of the interview. The second method was chosen partly because of the expense which would have been involved if a translator had been employed to transcribe the tapes. Thus, I would ask the question, the interpreter translated the question and relayed the response to me. Subsequently an Indian woman listened to some of the tapes and commented on the accuracy of the previous interpretation: her assessment was favourable. Interviews with the Asian mothers were shorter than those with the West Indian and white mothers and it is difficult to assess whether this was a real difference or simply a consequence of different interview techniques. Certainly the responses of the Asian women were generally more rigid, less confused and contradictory than the others and this seemed to imply greater certainty in their beliefs which may in itself have resulted in shorter answers.

The use of a tape recorder was relatively unproblematic in that the respondents were mainly unconcerned about being taped. Moreover the fact that the equipment was unreliable relaxed the atmosphere, and the respondents and I

laughed a lot as I repeatedly tested the recording prior to the interview. At times the women would say things on tape which they subsequently asked me not to disclose and in general they appeared uninhibited by the tape recorder.

Thus the atmosphere in which the interviews took place was mainly relaxed and most of the respondents said how much they had enjoyed the experience. They welcomed the opportunity to talk about themselves and their lives and often said details had been revealed which had never previously been exposed. Frequently the respondents and I would talk for a long time once the interview itself had been completed. The women would speak about their isolation and loneliness and often I would feel uncomfortable about leaving. On the one hand I was anxious to complete another interview and on the other I did not feel sufficiently detached simply to terminate my relationship with the respondent once I had achieved my aim of completing the interview schedule. With several West Indian and white women, and their children, I maintained contact over a period of months and subsequently two joined a Women's Group, another two a playgroup and one went to a counselling agency. The enthusiasm with which these women appeared to anticipate my visits possibly reflected the isolation of their lives and at times I felt unclear about my role. Once the interview had been completed, I attempted to move out of the role of researcher but this role was never totally abandoned and I maintained an academic interest in subsequent contact. In addition to that of researcher, however, I accumulated a number of other roles including counsellor, friend, job referee, information source. Because of my role as researcher it was assumed that I possessed certain knowledge and skills and I was often approached for help and advice. This post-interview contact was however largely confined to the West Indian and white respondents and

possibly reflects the more self-contained nature of Asian family life: family affairs are not widely discussed outside of the family and the Asian community itself is generally available for help and advice.

Writing Up

Initially I attempted to summarise the data directly from the tapes but found it very difficult to work from the spoken, rather than written, word and decided to transcribe the tapes prior to analysis. Although transcription was a very time consuming process it had the advantage of familiarising me with the data and provided a record of the complete interviews in an accessible format. Obviously a lot of emphasis and expression is lost when the spoken word is transcribed onto paper but verbal expression was influential in my analysis of the data. The procedure I adopted for writing up the fieldwork section was to analyse each question, in turn, throughout all the interviews in an attempt to illuminate similarities and differences between the three groups of women. In the main I relied on the respondents' own words to convey their sentiments, and the content and structure of this section was largely determined by the interviews.

The chapters of this thesis were not researched in the order in which they appear but rather my reading reflected the development of my thinking and the changing emphasis of the research. Initially I concentrated on the then 'race relations' literature and was made aware of the limited data on black women in Britain. Studies from the United States covered this issue in more depth but had limited relevance for my research. Evidence on the position of women within West Indian and

Asian society influenced the construction of my interview schedule and pointed to the importance of cultural differences in the interpretation of gender roles. Prior to conducting this research I was fairly familiar with the literature on child care provision and women's waged work in Britain and I wrote a draft of Chapter 3 before undertaking the empirical research. This knowledge was valuable when I researched child care provision in Birmingham since it provided me with the necessary national information. Chapter 1 on Approaches to Women's Work was, however, written after the section on my survey and my empirical data highlighted certain limitations in previous approaches, particularly the tendency to treat women as a homogeneous group and to concentrate either on the role of women within the family or on their position within the labour market. I found the final Chapter particularly difficult to write because it attempts to link my fieldwork data to existing evidence and to demonstrate the complex relationship which exists between the major areas of my research - ethnicity, women's employment, the position of women within the family and state and employers' policies.

At the time of writing up my empirical data the responses I received in answer to questions on marriage and motherhood had particular significance for me since I was assessing my own position in relation to men and also considering having a child. Also, particularly as a woman working at home, I was faced with the problem of convincing others that what I was doing was as real as the paid work outside the home and I could relate to the experiences of the homeworkers I had interviewed. It is assumed that women at home are totally available to perform domestic labour. In

the last two years I have had two children and this has highlighted for me the relationship between women in the home, women's employment and child care. The conflicting emotions, and practical difficulties, described by my respondents who combined paid work and motherhood have become all too clear. Analysis of my data was thus influenced not only by the literature I had read and the discussions I had engaged in but also by my own experience, particularly during the latter period of the research. Selection and analysis of data is inevitably influenced by personal values and experience but I feel that my increased empathy with the emotions and experiences of the women I interviewed facilitated a greater understanding. Skills I have acquired as a counsellor, which aim at both detachment and empathy, I feel have also been valuable. Nevertheless, as noted in Chapter 1², my data is based on only 89 interviews which were analysed in the context of limited existing evidence. My research provides substantive evidence of the complex relationship which exists between women's employment, their family position, cultural influences, and social policy, and further research needs to take account of the differences which exist between women.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Mention: 1. The interview is in two parts - first mainly about employment, second concentrates on respondent's life as a wife and mother. 2. Respondent has the option of stopping after the first section and completing the interview on another day. 3. Schedule is not as long as it looks because respondents do not answer every section. 4. Interview is recorded to save time. 5. Confidentiality.

PART I

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. In 1971 there were ... people living in your household, yourself ... and ... children. Has that changed - has anyone moved in or out, have you had a baby or have there been any other changes?

If change: Establish age/marital status/relationship with respondent.

2. How old is/are your child/ren?

Establish names, sex and date of birth of children under five.

3. Have you any other children who are not living with you at present?

Establish age/sex/where living/who living with/whether respondent provides financial assistance.

4. So you are still single/married/separated/divorced/living with your boyfriend?

If married or cohabiting: Establish length of marriage or cohabitation.

TURN TO SECTION

B(1) If mother not head of household and born in U.K.

B(2) If mother not head of household and not born in U.K.

C If mother head of household

TURN TO SECTION C

MOTHER'S EDUCATION

SECTION B(1) - Ask if mother is not head of household and born in U.K.

And now can we move on to a few brief questions about your schooling

1. What type of secondary school did you last attend?
2. Did you attend any college or university as a full-time student after leaving secondary school?

If yes: What type of college did you last attend?

3. How old were you when you finished your full-time education?

4. Have you passed any (a) school qualifications
(b) higher education qualifications
(c) work qualifications (e.g. apprenticeship)

If yes: What qualification?

5. Looking back to your education (so far), are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the education you received?

Why do you say that?

TURN TO SECTION C

SECTION B(2) - Ask if mother is not head of household and not born in U.K.

And now can we move on to a few brief questions about your schooling

1. Since coming to the U.K. have you been a full-time pupil or student at a school or college in the U.K.?
- If no: How many years schooling did you have before coming to the U.K.?
- If yes: At what age did you begin full-time education in the U.K.?

2. How old were you when you finished your full-time education?

3. If yes to q. 1: What type of secondary school did you last attend?

4. If yes to q. 1: Did you attend any college or university as a full-time student after leaving secondary school?

If yes: What type of college did you last attend?

5. Have you passed any (a) school qualifications
(b) higher education qualifications
(c) work qualifications (e.g. apprenticeship)

If yes: What qualification?

6. Looking back to your education (so far), are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the education you received?

Why do you say that?

TURN TO SECTION C

EMPLOYMENTSECTION C - Ask all mothers

This section is about your work since you left school

1. When you left school did you get a job straight away?

If no: Why not? Did you want a job? When did you start work?

ASK THE FOLLOWING FOR ALL JOBS UP TO THE PRESENT:

- (a) Type of work?
- (b) Why did you choose that? - How job obtained?
- (c) Outside employment - where - or homework?
- (d) Full or part-time?
- (e) How long did you work in that job?
(establish approx. start and finish dates of each job)
- (f) Why change jobs?
- (g) Did you get another job straight away?
(establish periods unemployed)
- (h) Why did you stop working?

2. In general what sort of things do you (did you) enjoy about working?

- (b) What do you (did you) dislike?
- (c) When you are (were) looking for a job what sort of things do you (did you) consider as important?
PROBE: pay, work mates, hours, ties in with child care, clean work, proximity to home etc.

3. Would you like to be able to do a different type of work?

- (b) Do you think there is any way you could get a job as a?
What prevents you?
- (c) Do you think you could have worked as a say when you were younger, or before you had a family?
What prevented you then?
- (d) Do you think that having children has limited your choice of work?
In what ways?

4. Looking back to when you were a teenager can you remember what job your mother wanted you to do?

Was she happy when you left school at ...?

- (b) How about your father? Did he agree with your mother?
- (c) And what did you think when you were at school - Did you feel it was important for a woman to have training for some kind of job?
Why / Why not?
- Do you think that way now?

5. Do you think it is important for a wife (or a woman living with a man) to have money she has earned herself?

Why / Why not?

6. In your opinion would you say that it is more important for a husband to have a job than for his wife to have a job, assuming that they both want to work?

Why / In what way?

7. What do you think of the situation where a wife has a more responsible and better paid job than her husband?

Why do you say that?

If yes to q. 6: Is it still more important for the husband to have a job?

8. In general what do you think about mothers of young children (under five) working?

Do you think it affects the children?

In what ways and under what circumstances?

Does your husband/boyfriend agree with you?

9. Now can I ask you a few questions about your experience of getting work....

(a) Would you say it is difficult or easy for someone like you (family ties and skills) to get a job? Why do you say that?

(b) West Indian migrants - Do you think it is easier or more difficult for you to get work here compared to the situation in the West Indies? If easier: Did that influence your decision to migrate?

10. (a) Have you ever felt that you didn't get a job because you are a woman?

If yes - establish circumstances.

(b) Have you ever felt that you didn't get a job because you have young children?

If yes - establish circumstances.

(c) In your experience do employers check that you have made arrangements for your children, should you get the job, when you are being interviewed?

Can you think of any firm that has not asked you about child care arrangements?

(d) Black women - Have you ever felt that you didn't get a job because you are black?

If yes - establish circumstances.

TURN TO SECTION D(1) if mother working outside the home

D(2) if mother not working

D(3) if working at home

SECTION D(1) - Ask mothers currently employed outside the home

1. You told me earlier that you are currently working as a
Would you please tell me a bit more about this job:-

Why did you choose it? - What did you see as its advantages?

Probe:

- (a) Hours: Number of hours, number of days, which days worked?
Are the hours convenient? How do they fit in with your daily routine?
 - (b) If part-time: Is it important to you that you work part-time rather than full-time? Could you work full-time? Would you like to work full-time? Also cover shift work.
 - (c) What about holidays - How much paid holiday do you get? Do you have to take your holiday at a fixed time? If yes is that convenient?
 - (d) Where is the firm? Is that convenient? How do you get there? How long does it take you to travel each way?
 - (e) What about pay - How much do you earn? Is that before or after tax? What do you think about that?
2. (a) Do you enjoy your work?
What in particular do you enjoy?
- (b) Do you dislike aspects of your work? Which aspects?
 - (c) What do you see as the advantages of working?
 - (d) And what about the disadvantages?
3. (a) Do you get on well with the people you work with?
(b) What do you talk to them about?
4. (a) Why do you work?
Money - Any other reasons?
- (b) Is the money you earn your own as far as your husband is concerned? Can you decide what to spend it on?
If you bought something for yourself (e.g. a pair of shoes) that you didn't really need would you tell your husband? What would his reaction be?
 - (c) What do you usually spend your wages on?
 - (d) Do you think it is important to have some money which you have earned yourself? Why? Why not?
5. (a) Supposing your husband/boyfriend got a better paid job (or got a job) and it was no longer necessary for you to earn extra money, would you:
- (i) Give up your job?
 - (ii) Cut your hours?
 - (iii) Continue as you are?

- (b) Or say you got a new source of money which you received and it was no longer financially necessary for you to work - would you
- (i) Give up your job?
 - (ii) Cut your hours?
 - (iii) Continue as you are?
6. (a) Can you remember how you felt the last time you stopped work? (How long unemployed?)
- (b) Did you feel stopping work changed you in any way?
- (c) Did you feel that people treated you differently?
- (d) How about your relationship with your husband - did things between you and your husband change in any way?
Probe: because of money, independence, domestic labour, things to talk about
7. (a) How do you think your job differs from your husband's?
- (b) Was it your husband's idea that you should work? - What does he think about you working?
- (c) Would you stop working if he really disagreed with you working?
8. (a) Do you feel that anyone (friends, neighbours, mother etc) think that you shouldn't work?
- (b) Why do you think they feel like that?
- (c) Do they actually criticise you?
- (d) What reasons do you (would you) give them as to why you work?

CHILD CARE

Now can we move on to talk a little about the arrangements made for the care of your child/ren while you are at work:

You have (number) children

(If aged 4 or 5 check whether or not they are at school)

ASK FOR EACH PRE-SCHOOL CHILD - Establish whether the arrangement is the same for all.

1. (a) What happens to while you are at work?
Who looks after him/her? (relative, friend, childminder, nursery etc.)
Does anyone else look after him/her, say before s/he goes to
- (b) How long has looked after/ How long has been going to
2. How does that arrangement work out (practical considerations): -
Probe: Time left and collected? Distance to travel? How do you get there? Expense? What if child or minder is ill? What if you are held up at work, miss the bus or something?

3. Was it difficult to make suitable arrangements for when you went back to work?
Probe: what difficulties? options available.
4. Would you prefer a different arrangement? Why?
Probe: quality of care/convenience.
- (b) Can you think of another person, or place would be more happy with/at?
- (c) If you had the choice would you rather went to - a childminder/a relative/a friend/a nursery school/a day nursery etc? Why?
- (d) Do you think that the race of the person who looks after makes a difference? Why? Do you have a preference? Why?
- 5 (a) Do you think is happy at? Does s/he like going there?
- (b) Since s/he has been going to have you noticed any difference in his/her behaviour or personality?
Why do you think this is so?
Do you see these changes as good or bad?
- (c) Do you know how spends the day?
Are you happy about that?
Do you ever worry that s/he does not get enough attention?
- (d) Do you worry about anything concerning a day?
Are there things you don't like and would like to change?
6. (a) Do you think would be better, or less well, looked after if you didn't work?
- (b) What does your husband/boyfriend think?
7. And finally on this section on child care, if you could make different arrangements (say different, or longer hours) do you think you would consider changing your job?
Do you think you will look for another job or work different hours when starts school?

TURN TO SECTION E(1) if mother head of household, living with husband/boyfriend, and husband/boyfriend born in U.K.
E(2) if mother head of household, living with husband/boyfriend, and husband/boyfriend not born in U.K.
F if mother not head of household and living with husband/boyfriend
G if mother not living with husband/boyfriend

SECTION D(2) - Ask mothers who are not currently employed

1. You are not working at the moment Why is that?
2. Have you ever worked while your children have been young (say under five)?
 If yes: Why did you give it up?
 If no: Why not?
3. Do you miss anything about working?
 If yes: What do you miss? (Probe: money, friends, getting out of the house etc.)
4. What do you see as the advantages of not working?
 What about the disadvantages?
5. When you were working was the money you earned your own as far as your husband was concerned? Could you spend it as you liked? For instance, if you bought something that you wanted (say a pair of shoes) but that you didn't really need, would you have told your husband? Probe: What would his reaction have been?
 b) Does it bother you at all not having money of your own that you have earned?
6. Do you feel that stopping work has changed you in any way?
 (Probe: confidence, things to talk about, domestic labour)
7. (a) Have you ever felt that you would like to be back at work?
 If yes: When do you feel that way? Why?
 (b) Do you feel that people treat you differently now that you are not working?
8. (a) If you could make satisfactory arrangements for the care of your child/ren during the day would you go back to work?
 (b) What would you consider 'satisfactory'?
 (c) Who would you be most happy about looking after your child/ren while you worked?
 (Probe: day nursery, husband/boyfriend, friend, childminder etc.)
 (d) Do you think that the race of the person who would look after your child/ren makes a difference?
 (Probe: Why? Preference?)
 (e) If your child was looked after by do you think s/he would be as happy and well cared for as if s/he spent the day with you?
 (f) What does your husband think?

9. At the moment do any of your children (does) attend a playgroup or nursery?

If yes: Do you think it does him/her good? In what way?

Probe: What about you - do you think it does you good?

For how long does s/he go? Would you like longer/shorter hours?

Do you ever go along too? Would you like to go along?

If no: Would you like your child/ren to go to a playgroup or nursery?

If no: Why not?

If yes: Now or when the child/ren is/are older? Hours preferred, whether mother wants to participate? Why does she want the child/ren to go (probe: benefit of mother or child or both)?

10. (a) What would your husband feel if you went back to work?

(b) What about other people - Do you think that your mother, friends, neighbours or anyone else would be critical if you went back to work? If yes: Why would they be critical?

11. (a) Do you ever feel that you ought to work?

(b) Has anyone (e.g. your husband, other relative, friend, institutions such as social security etc.) put pressure on you to get a job, or been critical of you not working?

If yes: probe for details.

12. (a) During the last week have you visited anyone during the day? Who? (friends, parents, relatives) How often?

(b) Has anyone visited you during the day?

(c) Has the last week been out of the ordinary in any way as far as visiting is concerned?

(d) Would you like to see more people during the day? If yes: What stops you?

13. Do you think you will return to work?

If no: Why not?

If yes: Why would you like to return? When? Why then?

What sort of job would you look for? Hours?

Would you like to go back to the sort of job you did before you had children? Would that be possible?

How difficult do you think it will be for you to find another job? Why do you say that?

- TURN TO SECTION E(1) if mother head of household, living with husband/boyfriend, and husband/boyfriend born in U.K.
E(2) if mother head of household, living with husband/boyfriend, and husband/boyfriend not born in U.K.
F if mother not head of household and living with husband/boyfriend
G if mother not living with husband/boyfriend

SECTION D(3) - Ask mothers currently employed at home

1. Details about the work Would you please tell me a bit more about your job?

Why did you choose it? What do you see as its advantages?

Probe:

- (a) What is made?
(Childminders): Number of children registered for, number of children actually cared for?
- (b) Equipment: Provided by employer? Breakages (e.g. needles)
(Childminders): Toy library, loans, fire guards etc.
- (c) Pay: piece rate? How long to make each article?
Whether the mother herself knows her hourly rate?
(Childminders): Charge per child? Time child arrives and leaves?
- (d) Control over amount of work: Fluctuations? Are these predictable?
Wants more or less work?
(Childminders): Cares for maximum number of children for whom she is registered? Fluctuations? Wants more or less?
- (e) Conditions: Sick or holiday pay? Pension? Insurance?
- (f) Hours: Routine - whether time set aside for work or whether work is fitted in with domestic labour. "Tell me about yesterday. What did you do from when you got up in the morning? Was yesterday out of the ordinary in any way?"
(Childminders): Routine - whether time set aside to play with children or fitted in with domestic labour?
"Tell me about yesterday"?

- 2. (a) Do you enjoy your work?
What in particular do you enjoy?
- (b) What do you think are the advantages of working at home?
- (c) Do you dislike aspects of your work? Which aspects?
- (d) And what do you see as the disadvantages of working at home?
- 3. Do you miss anything about the time when you worked outside the home?
- 4. (a) Do you feel that stopping work outside the home has changed you in any way? (When was the last time mother worked outside the home?)
- (b) How about your relationship with your husband, did that change in any way?
(Probe: domestic labour, things to talk about)

5. (a) Why do you work?
- (b) Is the money you earn your own so far as your husband is concerned? Do you decide what to do with it?
- (c) What do you usually spend your wages on?
- (d) Do you think it is important to have some money which you have earned yourself?
- (e) Do you feel that the money you earn influences your relationship with your husband?
6. (a) Supposing your husband got a better paid job and it was no longer financially necessary for you to earn extra money - would you:-
 - (i) Give up your job?
 - (ii) Cut your hours?
 - (iii) Continue as you are?
7. (a) How do you think your job differs from your husband's?
- (b) What does your husband think about you working?
- (c) Would you stop working if he really disagreed with you working?
- (d) What would your husband feel if you got a job outside the home? Would he let you work outside the home?
8. (a) Do you feel anyone (friends, neighbours, mother etc.) think that you shouldn't work?
- (b) Do you think people would be critical if you worked outside the home?
9. (a) Have you ever felt that you would like to be working in a factory or office (again)?
If yes: When do you feel that way? Why?
10. (a) If you could make satisfactory arrangements for the care of your child/ren during the day would you go (back) to work outside the home?
- (b) What would you consider 'satisfactory'?
- (c) Who would you be most happy about looking after your child/ren while you worked?
(day nursery, father, friend, childminder, mother etc)
- (d) Do you think that the race of the person who looks after your child/ren makes a difference?
Do you have a preference? Why?
- (e) If your child was looked after by do you think s/he would be as happy and well cared for as if s/he spent the day with you?
- (f) What does your husband think?

11. (a) At the moment do any of your children (does) attend a playgroup or nursery?

If yes: Do you think it does him/her good? In what way?
What about you - do you think it does you good?
For how long does s/he go? Would you like longer or shorter hours?
Do you ever go along too? Would you like to go along?

If no: Would you like your child/ren to go to a playgroup or nursery?
If no: Why not?
If yes: Now or when the child/ren is/are older? Hours preferred, whether mother wants to participate? Why does she want the child/ren to go (probe: benefit of mother or child or both)?

12. (a) During the last week have you visited anyone during the day?
Who? (friends, parents, other relatives) How often?
(b) Has anyone visited you during the day?
(c) Has the last week been out of the ordinary in any way as far as visiting is concerned?
(d) Would you like to see more people during the day?
If yes: What stops you?

13. Do you think you will work outside the home (again)?

If no: Why not?

If yes: Why would you like to return? When? Why then?

What sort of job would you look for? Hours?

Would you like to go back to the sort of job you did before you had children? Would that be possible?

How difficult do you think it would be for you to get a job outside the home?

Why do you say that?

- TURN TO SECTION E (1) If mother head of household, living with husband/boyfriend and husband/boyfriend born in U.K.
E(2) If mother head of household, living with husband/boyfriend, and husband/boyfriend not born in U.K.
F If mother not head of household and living with husband/boyfriend
G If mother not living with husband/boyfriend

HUSBAND'S (COHABITEE'S) EDUCATION

SECTION E(1) - Ask if mother living with husband (boyfriend), head of household and husband (boyfriend) born in U.K.

And now can we move on to a few brief questions about your husband's (boyfriend's) schooling

1. What type of secondary school did he last attend?
2. Did he attend any college or university as a full-time student after leaving secondary school?

If yes: What type of college did he last attend?

3. How old was he when he finished his full-time education?

4. Has he passed any (a) school qualifications
(b) higher education qualifications
(c) work qualifications (e.g. apprenticeship)

If yes: Which qualifications?

TURN TO SECTION F

SECTION E(2) - Ask if mother living with husband (boyfriend), head of household, and husband (boyfriend) not born in U.K.

And now can we move on to a few brief questions about your husband's (boyfriend's) schooling

1. Since coming to the U.K. has he been a full-time pupil or student at a school or college in the U.K.?

If no: How many years schooling did he have before coming to the U.K.?

If yes: At what age did he begin full-time education in the U.K.?

2. How old was he when he finished his full-time education?
3. If yes to q.1: What type of secondary school did he last attend?
4. If yes to q.1: Did he attend any college or university as a full-time student after leaving secondary school?

If yes: What type of college did he last attend?

5. Has he passed any (a) school qualifications
(b) higher education qualifications
(c) work qualifications (e.g. apprenticeship)

If yes: Which qualifications?

TURN TO SECTION F

HUSBAND'S (COHABITEE'S) EMPLOYMENTSECTION F - Ask all mothers living with husband/boyfriend

Now I'd like to ask you about your husband's (boyfriend's) work

1. Is your husband/boyfriend working at the moment?If yes

- (a) Type of work - How long has he been doing that job?
- (b) Why did he choose that?
- (c) Hours - actual hours worked, no. of days, which days (for instance last week)
Shift work - does he ever do shift work, hours, how often?
Are the hours convenient for you?
- (d) Where is the firm? Travelling time - How long is he away from home?
Does your husband/boyfriend tell you about events at work?

If no

- (a) What was the last job he did?
- (b) How long did he do that for - When did he start and when did he leave?
- (c) Why did he stop that job? What do you think about that?
- (d) Is he looking for work?
- (e) Do you think it will be difficult for him to find another job?
- (f) Do you ever feel that he could try harder to find another job?
- (g) While your husband/boyfriend is not working does he do more of the household tasks? Probe Does he do the shopping/cooking/cleaning/washing/looking after the children? Regularly or as a 'favour'?
- (h) Do you think he should do more?
- (i) Have there been other times when he's been out of work? Probe.

2. If yes to question 1

- Have there been times when your husband/boyfriend has been out of work?

If yes

- (a) When? Why did he stop the job he had?
- (b) Were you working then?
- (c) How long was he out of work?
- (d) Was he looking for work?
- (e) Did you ever feel that he could have tried harder to find another job?
- (f) While your husband/boyfriend was not working did he do more of the household tasks? Probe: Did he do the shopping/cooking/cleaning/washing/looking after the children? Regularly or as a 'favour'?
- (g) Do you think he should have done more?

3. Do you (did you) know how much your husband/boyfriend earns?

- 4. Does your husband/boyfriend (did your husband/boyfriend) know how much you earn(ed)?

5. Families vary a lot in the way they share out the household income. In some, the husband gives his wife a regular housekeeping allowance or he gives all his earnings to his wife and gets an allowance back. In others husband and wife have a joint bank account, and there are many other ways.
- What do you and your husband do?
- What do you do when you need a rise in your housekeeping?
- Are you usually successful in getting a rise?
6. So in general would you say that your money and your husband's money belong to you both, or that you keep your money separate from his money?

TURN TO SECTION G

LEISURESECTION G - Ask all mothers

Can we now talk about how you spend your evenings and weekends:-

1. (a) How do you usually spend your evenings?
- (b) How often did you go out in the evening during the last week?
Where did you go?
Who with? (with husband, with children?)
- (c) Is this a fairly typical week?
2. (a) How does your husband/boyfriend usually spend his evenings?
- (b) How often did he go out in the evening last week?
Where did he go?
Who with? (with wife, with children?)
- (c) Is this a fairly typical week?
3. (a) What do you usually do at weekends?
- (b) What did you do last weekend?
Who with?
- (c) Is this a fairly typical weekend?
4. (a) And what does your husband/boyfriend usually do at weekends?
- (b) What did he do last weekend?
Who with?
- (c) Is this fairly typical?
5. Do you find that you spend a lot of time with your child/ren at weekends - do things they enjoy - or do they tend to carry on with their own activities?
6. (a) Would you like to spend more of your leisure time with your husband/boyfriend?
- (b) What do you feel about him going out without you?
- (c) And what does he feel about you going out on your own?
- (d) Would he like to spend more of his leisure time with you?
7. (a) Would you say you went out more before you had the children?
- (b) Do you find it difficult to get someone to babysit?
- (c) Would you like to go out more?
- (d) How do you feel when you go out without the children - Do you tend to think about them when you are out/worry about them?
- (e) And how does your husband feel when he goes out without them?
- (f) Would you say he went out more before you had the children?

8. (a) Have you got friends who live nearby?
 (b) When do you usually see them?
 (c) Do you see them together with your husband/hoyfriend?
 (d) Do you usually take the children?
9. (a) Does your husband have his own friends, or would you say most of your friends are both your friends and your husband's friends?
 (b) Are most of your friends married or single?
 (c) Do you still see friends you had before you were married/ before you had the children?
 (d) What about your husband - does he still see friends he had before he was married?
10. (a) Do your parents live near? How far away?
 (b) How often do you see your mother (with husband?) or contact her by 'phone or letter?
 (c) How often do you see your father (with husband?) or contact him by 'phone or letter?
 (d) Would you like to see them more or less?
11. (a) Do your brothers or sisters live near? How far away?
 (b) How often do you see them (with husband?) or contact them by 'phone or letter?
 (c) Would you like to see them more or less?
12. (a) How about your husband's parents - do they live near?
 (b) How often do you see them (with husband?) or contact them by 'phone or letter?
 (c) Would you like to see them more or less?
 (d) Does your husband see them more than you do?

PART II

Mention interval between first and second part of interview and then point out that the second part of the interview is mainly about the respondent's life as a mother, her ideas on marriage and child-rearing, and a little about when she was younger

SECTION A - Ask all mothers

1. Looking back to when you were about 14 how did you see your life in say 5 or 10 years' time?
 - (a) Did you want to get married, or did you ever consider not getting married?
 - (b) What about having children - did you ever think of not having children?
 - (c) When you were in your teens did any of your friends have a baby without being married?

If yes: Can you remember how you felt (jealous, sorry for them)?

If no: What would you have thought?
 - (d) Did you expect to work when you were married and had children?
2. What did your mother and father want you to do?
 - (a) Did they encourage you (or do they encourage you) to get married?
 - (b) Did they encourage you to train for a skilled job, or did they think it wasn't worth a girl training for a career?
 - (c) If you had been pregnant without being married what do you think your mother's reaction would have been?

And your father's reaction?

OR When you told your parents you were pregnant what was your mother's reaction?

And your father's reaction?

Did anyone suggest, or did you consider, either adoption or abortion?

How do your parents feel about the baby/child now - when did they change?
3. And what do you think about marriage?
 - (a) Do you think that all women want to get married?

Why/Why not?
 - (b) If not married: Do you want to get married?

Do you think people would treat you differently if you were married?

Do you think it would be best for your child/ren if you were married? Why/Why not?
 - If married: Do you think people would treat you differently if you weren't actually married but still living with your husband?

- (c) Do you see marriage as a permanent arrangement - What do you think about divorce?
- (d) From the point of view of the woman what do you think are the advantages of being married?
- If married: What do you like best about being married?
- (e) What about from the man's point of view:
- The advantages?
- The disadvantages?
- (f) In what ways do you think it is difficult for a mother to bring up a child without living with a man?
- Can you see any advantages in bringing up a child without living with a man?
- (g) Do you think there is a difference between living with a man and being married? In what way(s)?
- Which do you think is best (a) from the point of view of the woman?
(b) from the point of view of the man?
4. (a) Do you think all women want to have children?
Why/Why not?
- (b) Do you feel that women who choose not to have children have a less satisfying life?
- (c) Could you have had a satisfying life without children?
- (d) What about men who do not have children - Are their lives less satisfying than the lives of fathers?
5. (a) What do you think are the characteristics of a 'good' wife?
Home: Domestic tasks. Do you think a wife should still do these things if her husband is unemployed?
- (b) What do you think are the characteristics of a 'good' husband?
If not married or cohabiting: What sort of man would you like to marry?
If married or cohabiting: What do you see as the good points in your husband/boyfriend?
- (c) Apart from physical differences, in what ways do you think men and women are different?
- (d) In general, do you think there are some things that men can do better than women, and other things women can do better than men?
What things? Why?
- (e) What do you think about men staying at home looking after the children while the wife goes to work?
- (f) Do you think women work as hard, harder, or not so hard as their husbands?

6. West Indian and Asian respondents: Would you say that women in this country work as hard, harder, or not so hard as women in the West Indies/India/Pakistan etc.?
How do you think their lives differ?

SECTION B - Ask all mothers

Now I'd like to ask you a few questions about your own childhood, and childhood in general

1. (a) Who did you live with during your childhood?
(b) And who was in the main responsible for your upbringing?
(c) Were there other people you remember as important in the early years of your life (uncles, aunts, grandmother etc.)?
Why were they important - time spent with them?
(d) In general would you say that your mother was a 'good' mother?
Who do you say that?
(i) What sort of mother was she?
(ii) What sort of housewife was she?
(iii) Do you feel she was happy being a mother and a housewife?
Would you like to be like your mother? In what way(s)?
Are there any aspects of your mother you would not like to copy?
(e) Did your mother work when you were a child?
If yes: What age were you?
Do you think you suffered in any way through her working?
What did your father feel about her working?
If no: Do you think your mother wanted to work?
Would you have suffered?
What do you think your father would have thought?
2. What do you think are the most important things in a child's life?
- What do you think is important for the proper development of the child?
Probe: Mother, father, grandparents, brothers/sisters, other relatives, housing/environment, physical care, stimulating play etc.
(b) Do you think that childhood should be a protected and carefree time, sheltered from the worries of everyday living, or do you think it is important that children become independent and capable of performing adult tasks as soon as is possible? Why?
(c) Does your child/ren do certain jobs to help you (washing up etc.)?
What sort of jobs? How often? When they are at school?
3. (a) How would you describe a 'good' mother?
(b) Do you think that a child's own mother is better able to understand and care for the child than a woman who has adopted the child as a baby?
Why do you think this is so?

- (c) What about the father - Can he care for and love the child in the same way as the mother?

Why do you say that?

What do you think is the role of the father?

Do you think he is important in terms of disciplining the children?

Do you think a mother can perform his role adequately?

What is a 'good' father?

- (d) In your opinion can anyone, other than the mother, care for a child as well as the mother?

Is there something special in the relationship between the mother and child which is unique? Why do you think that is so?

- (e) What do you think of the situation where several families (not relatives), with children, live in the same house and each person takes a turn in looking after the children (e.g. in feeding them, putting them to bed, bathing them) and no child is seen as the mother's exclusive responsibility?

- (f) At what age do you think it's okay for someone other than the mother to look after the child during the day?

4. (a) Do you think it is important for young children to play with children of their own age? Why/why not? From what age is this important?

- (b) And what do you think about children playing with children of a different race? - Do you think it does the child good or harm?

5. Some people think that mothers of children under five ought to accept that children of this age are a tie and that the mother ought to be prepared to give up these years to their child. What do you think - should the life of a mother of a pre-school child revolve around the child?

Probe: (1) What about mothers of children under five working when they don't really need the money?

(2) Also, what about mothers of children under five going out a lot in the evenings and leaving the child with a babysitter?

Do you think that having a child changes the father's life as much as the mother's? Why do you think this is so? Do you think it should?

6. (a) Do you think it is important to plan children? Why/why not?

- (b) What do you think about contraception?

Do you use precautions to plan children?

Do you think it is harmful to the mother?

What does your husband/boyfriend think?

- (c) What about abortion - what do you think about abortion?

What does your husband/boyfriend think?

Do you feel that people think badly of a woman who's had an abortion?

- (d) And what about adoption - what do you think about adoption?

What does your husband/boyfriend think?

- (e) Did you ever discuss these subjects with your own mother?
Do you think she would have felt embarrassed about discussing matters relating to sex with you when you were young?
Will you tell your own child/ren or leave it to them to find out when they are old enough? At what age would you tell them?

SECTION C - Ask all mothers

Now can we move on to talk a bit about your own children

1. Did you decide to have or it just happened?
(Ask for each child)
If decided: Who decided? Did the other partner agree?
2. (a) Looking back to when you were pregnant with your first baby was your husband (the baby's father) interested in your pregnancy and such things as helping you with your breathing exercises?
If no: Would you have liked him to have been interested?
(b) Was your mother interested? Other relatives? Friends?
3. (a) What about the birth of your first child:-
Was your husband (the baby's father) present?
Could he have been?
Would you have liked him there?
Do you think he would have liked to have been present?
(b) Was anyone else present?
4. (a) A lot of mothers get worried when they are first responsible for caring for a tiny baby. During the early months of your first baby's life was there anyone to talk to when you were worried about something or wanted advice?
(Husband, mother, relatives, friends, health visitor etc.)
(b) What about now - Who do you talk to when you are worried about one of the children?
And in general who do you talk to if you've had a bad day?
Do you tell your husband?
5. (a) Before you had your first child did you have any ideas about what it would be like to be a mother?
What were they? Were you right?
6. Did you feel ready to be a mother when was born?
7. (a) How did you 'learn' to look after your children?
Probe the importance of: maternal instinct, learning from mother, trial and error/experience, books/magazines, classes
Some mothers feel it's important to find out what the 'experts' (like doctors) have to say about raising children while others don't think that's necessary. What do you think?

(b) Do you remember helping to look after younger children when you were young?

If yes: Whose children? At what age was that? Did you enjoy looking after them?

(c) Would you say that you have changed your ideas about raising children since your first child was born?
In what ways? Why have they changed?

8. (a) What would you say are the best things about being a mother?
(b) And the worst?

9. Do you think you do a good job in looking after your children - Would you say you're a good mother?

10. What do you think are the most important things you do for your child/ren? Is the amount of attention you give children important?

11. Do you think you could be a better mother if you had more time you could spend with your child/ren?

12. Each day do you set aside a certain amount of time to do things with your child/ren or are they (is he/she) just 'with you' when you are at home?

13. How important do you think the first five years of a child's life are in determining their personality?
Why do you say that?

14. If your child/ren do (does) not grow up as you would have liked do you think you will blame yourself in some way?

15. Do you want more children?

If yes: When? Why?

If no: Why not?

TURN TO SECTION D(1) if mother living with father of child
D(2) if mother not living with father of child

- (b) Do you remember helping to look after younger children when you were young?
If yes: Whose children? At what age was that? Did you enjoy looking after them?
- (c) Would you say that you have changed your ideas about raising children since your first child was born?
 In what ways? Why have they changed?
8. (a) What would you say are the best things about being a mother?
 (b) And the worst?
9. Do you think you do a good job in looking after your children - Would you say you're a good mother?
10. What do you think are the most important things you do for your child/ren? Is the amount of attention you give children important?
11. Do you think you could be a better mother if you had more time you could spend with your child/ren?
12. Each day do you set aside a certain amount of time to do things with your child/ren or are they (is he/she) just 'with you' when you are at home?
13. How important do you think the first five years of a child's life are in determining their personality?
 Why do you say that?
14. If your child/ren do (does) not grow up as you would have liked do you think you will blame yourself in some way?
15. Do you want more children?
If yes: When? Why?
If no: Why not?

TURN TO SECTION D(1) if mother living with father of child
 D(2) if mother not living with father of child

SECTION D(1) - Ask respondents living with child's father

This section is about what part your husband/boyfriend plays in the care of your child/ren

1. (a) Do you ever leave the children with their father during the evening when you go out?
 If yes: How often?
 If no: Why not?

- (b) Have you ever left the child/ren with their father overnight?
 If yes: How often?
 If no: Why not?

- (c) Do you (or would you) worry about leaving the child/ren with their father? Do you think there are any differences in the way you and your husband take care of the child/ren?
 If yes: What differences?
 Why do you think this is so?
 If no: Would you say he could have coped as well as you when the children were babies?

2. (a) Does your husband (the child's father) help with the day to day care of the children?

During the last week has he:

- (i) got the children up and dressed?
 (ii) changed a dirty nappy?
 (iii) fed the children
 (iv) bathed the children?
 (v) got up in the night to see to the children?
 (vi) played with them?
 (vii) taken them out?

If yes: How often?

For each no: Do you think he would have done this if you'd asked him?

Do you think he should help more with this?

Would you like/dislike him helping any more?

- (b) Was last week a fairly typical week, or was it unusual in any way?

- (c) Does he do these jobs regularly, as part of a routine, or not?

3. Does your husband feel strongly about how the children should be brought up?

Does he try to influence the way you are bringing them up, or is that really up to you?

Does he ask your opinion on how to deal with the children?

Does he give you advice on how to deal with problems?

4. In general do you think your husband feels more awkward towards the children than you?

For instance, how does he react if one of the children is crying?

What about when they were babies?

5. Bringing up young children often involves close physical contact between parent and child. Some fathers enjoy this while others feel awkward about it how do you think your husband feels?
6. (a) Do you think that a father can give children the same kind of love and affection as a mother?
 (b) Would you say that you and your husband show affection to the children in different ways?
 (c) Do you think your husband sometimes finds it difficult to show his love for the children?
7. Would you say that your husband gets as much pleasure and satisfaction from the child/ren as you get?
 Is it different in any way?
8. Does your husband understand what it is like to be a mother looking after small children?
 What does he think of it?
 Does your husband think you work hard?
 Is he supportive? Does he give you a lot of support?
9. Many couples find that when they have children they have a feeling of growing apart from each other, because the husband and wife live in such separate worlds. Others find that having children brings the husband and wife 'closer together' because they share a common interest and concern..... Have you found either of these to be true in your relationship with your husband?
 Which of these situations would you say is closer to what has happened in your family?

TURN TO SECTION E

SECTION D(2) - Ask respondents who are not living with their child's father

1. If widowed, divorced, separated:
 - (a) How long were you married?
 - (b) How long is it since your husband was living with you?
2. If divorced or separated:
Was the divorce/separation a mutual decision?
3. If single:
 - (a) Did you live with 's father?
 - (b) How long was that for?
 - (c) How long is it since 's father was living with you?
4. Except widowed:
 - (a) Do you still see 's father?
 - If yes: How often?
 - If no: Do the children see him? How often?
 - (b) Does he help you and the child/ren financially?
 - If yes: Voluntarily? Regularly?
5. Do you think the father should be made to contribute towards the cost of a child even if he does not live with the family, or do you think the mother should get an allowance from the government?
Why do you think that?
6. Do you feel that your child/ren suffer in any way because their father is not living with them?
If no: Why do you say that? Do you think they are better off?
If yes: In what ways?
7. Is there someone in your child/ren's life whom you feel does some of the things that a father would normally do (such as taking them out, playing with them, giving them affection)?
8. Do you feel that having the child/ren makes it more difficult or easier for you to develop a relationship with a man? How do men react when they know that you already have - Do they see it as an advantage or a disadvantage?

TURN TO SECTION E

SECTION E - Ask all mothers

1. Would you say you are generally satisfied, or generally dissatisfied, or neither in particular, with your life at the moment?
2. If you compare your life now with what it was like before you became a mother would you say you are happier now, less happy, or about the same?
Why do you think this is so?
3. Is there anything about your life now that you would like to change?
4. Recently, what, or what sorts of thing, have made you feel good or happy?
5. And what, or what sorts of thing, have made you feel low or unhappy?
6. Do you think that women get a better or worse deal in marriage than men?

If daughter(s)

7. When your daughter is grown up what would you like to see her doing?
8. Would you like her life to follow the same sort of direction as your life?
If not: How would you like it to be different?
9. Do you think that education is as important for a girl as a boy?
10. If you could have the last ten years over again would you do anything differently?
Would you get married?
If ever married: Would you marry the same person you did marry?
If you could only be a wife or a mother (but not both) which would you choose?
11. Have you ever heard of the Women's Liberation Movement?
If yes: What do you think of it?

FINALLY Just while I'm putting the tape recorder away would you ring the correct answers on this sheet.

TURN TO SECTION E

HEALTH QUESTIONNAIREPLEASE RING THE CORRECT ANSWER

- | | | |
|---|----------------|----|
| 1. Do you often have back-ache? | YES | NO |
| 2. Do you feel tired most of the time? | YES | NO |
| 3. Do you often feel miserable or depressed? | YES | NO |
| 4. Do you often have bad headaches? | YES | NO |
| 5. Do you often get worried about things? | YES | NO |
| 6. Do you usually have great difficulty in falling asleep or staying awake? | YES | NO |
| 7. Do you usually wake unnecessarily early in the morning? | YES | NO |
| 8. Do you wear yourself out worrying about your health? | YES | NO |
| 9. Do you often get into a violent rage? | YES | NO |
| 10. Do people often annoy and irritate you? | YES | NO |
| 11. Have you at times had a twitching of the face, head or shoulders? | YES | NO |
| 12. Do you often suddenly become scared for no good reason? | YES | NO |
| 13. Are you scared to be alone when there are no friends near you? | YES | NO |
| 14. Are you easily upset or irritated? | YES | NO |
| 15. Are you frightened of going out alone or of meeting people? | YES | NO |
| 16. Are you constantly keyed up and jittery? | YES | NO |
| 17. Do you suffer from indigestion? | YES | NO |
| 18. Do you often suffer from an upset stomach? | YES | NO |
| 19. Is your appetite poor? | YES | NO |
| 20. Does every little thing get on your nerves and wear you out? | YES | NO |
| 21. Does your heart often race like mad? | YES | NO |
| 22. Do you often have bad pains in your eyes? | YES | NO |
| 23. Are you troubled with rheumatism or fibrositis? | YES | NO |
| 24. Have you ever had a nervous breakdown? | YES | NO |